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RELIGION—ITS PROPHETS AND  
FALSE PROPHETS



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# RELIGION—ITS PROPHETS AND FALSE PROPHETS

BY

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DEDICATED

TO

DOROTHEA AND LESLYE IDA

TO

THE MEMORY OF CLARE ROSAMOND

TO

VIRGINIA ST. JOHN AND MYRA AMELIA

OUR CHILDREN



## A PERSONAL WORD

THE message in this book is one that has been seeking expression since the author's Seminary days at the Episcopal Theological School at Cambridge, Massachusetts—more than twenty years ago.

Owing to the self-sacrificing co-operation of his mother—early left a widow—he was enabled to receive his preparation for the ministry. It came at a time when the sense of the social implications of Christianity was beginning to be quickened and Prof. Nash was expressing to his pupils those views later embodied in his "Genesis of the Social Conscience." After three years of seemingly fruitless preaching of the social gospel, the sympathetic furtherance of his wife enabled the author to spend three years in Europe in further study.

Germany was selected as offering the best opportunities. The problem he proposed was—"How is the economic and social order to be reformed according to the Christian principle of the law of service?" So for two semesters at Berlin and for two and a half more at Halle the author studied economics under distinguished teachers. Germany had promised much. The science of "*Sozialpolitik*" was developing a program for the material betterment of the masses from above; the Social



Democratic party proposed a program for complete political and economic democratization. Between the two stood the mediating political party of Pastor Friedrich Naumann which was proposing a social reformation on the principles of the Gospel.

But while the author was in Germany a reactionary change was in process. Naumann returned from the Palestine trip on which he had been the personal guest of the Kaiser—changed from a Christian Socialist to a Pan-Germanist. The theologians were reaching the conclusion that the teachings of Jesus belonged as a whole to a passed age. Johannes Weiss thought he had discovered that Jesus represented the fanatical Apocalypticism of His Own times and people. Harnack partly shared this view and was becoming convinced that in the pursuit of the tasks of *Kultur* the program of Jesus must be modified in the interest of a modern German morality. Papers read at the Evangelical Social Congresses showed this trend away from the acceptance of the authority of Jesus in social and political matters. He was explained away as a "Beautiful Spirit" rather than as a practical Leader of men.

These tendencies were felt by the author and led him to give especial attention to the critical study of the "eschatological problem," with the result that he reached conclusions diametrically opposed to those that were then seeking acceptance. (See Chapters V, VI and VII.) He was led to these studies as a direct outcome of his interest in ascer-

taining how far the teachings of the historic Jesus are in contact with modern social needs.

While rector of St. Andrew's Church in Rochester, New York, the author became associated with the Rev'd. Dr. Paul Moore Strayer (now President of the Social Service Commission of the Presbyterian Church), author of the *Reconstruction of the Church*, and Prof. Walter Rauschenbusch—the well-known teacher and author of works on the Social Message of Christianity—in the movement known as "The People's Sunday Evening." From the stimulus of this association this work has profited greatly. Prof. Rauschenbusch's trenchant criticisms caused the book to be rewritten twice after the author thought it ready for publication.

The call to teach in the Theological Department of the University of the South brought opportunities of association, and the academic vacations afforded the leisure, needed to give this work its present form. To his colleagues of the Theological Faculty he is indebted for stimulating criticisms and helpful suggestions. He owes his acquaintance with the writings of Prof. Howison (see Chapter VI) to Prof. T. P. Bailey, and at the instigation of Prof. H. L. Jewett Williams (at present serving as Captain in the United States forces) he restudied the Synoptic problem. Prof. John M. McBryde, Jr., head of the English Department of the University and Editor of the *Sewanee Review*, corrected faulty expressions and suggested improvements in style.

As the work progressed and up to the time of its

completion great practical assistance was received from the author's friend and former parishioner, Miss D. Gurnee of Rochester, New York, who generously placed her skill as a stenographer and typewriter at his disposal.

JAMES BISHOP THOMAS.

SEWANEE, TENN., December 9, 1917.

## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION. The Professional *vs.* the *Amateur*.  
§I. Temptations to Professionalism in Religion. §II. Opportunities for Exploitation of Religion. §III. Prophets, the Foes of the Religious Exploiters. §IV. The Conflict in Old Testament Passes into History of Christianity. §V. The Object of this Book. §VI. Jesus and the Prophetic Religion. §VII. Rival Claimants to the Sanction of Jesus' Authority. §VIII. Our Subject Is Vital to the World's Greatest Issue Today. . . . Pages xvii-xxii

CHAPTER I. RISE OF THE JEWISH PRIESTHOOD. Introductory. §I. Religion of the Nomad Semites. §II. A Lay Religion. §III. Sources of the Prophetic and Priestly Religions — *Pia Fraus*. §IV. Rise of Priestly Caste. . . . . Pages 1-12

CHAPTER II. THE RISE OF PROPHECY. §I. Its Hereditary Origin. §II. Its Conflict with Its Opposite. §III. The Resulting Type of Prophetic Consciousness. . . . . Pages 13-28

CHAPTER III. PROPHECY AND ETHICS. §I. The Value of the Human Individual Discovered through Mystical Experience. §II. History, the Field for the Working Out of God's Plan. §III. Religious and Ethical Universalism. §IV. The Unity of God and Consequent Solidarity of Mankind. §V. The Divinely Appointed Historic Destiny of Mankind — The Reign of God on Earth — Messianic Era. . . . . 29-44

CHAPTER IV. THE PRIESTHOOD ESTABLISHES A MONOPOLY AND DEVELOPES A LEGALISTIC ETHIC AND PRIESTLY THEOLOGY — Priestly Exactions. §I. Amorite Shrines Basis of Israelite Priestly Colleges — Exploitation of Judicial Functions and Court Influence. §II. The Deuteronomic Conspiracy. §III. The False Prophets and Jeremiah. §IV. The Fruits of the Exile. §V. The Jewish Theocracy Supplants the Davidic Monarchy. §VI. Post Exilic Theology and Ethic. §VII. Priestly Emoluments. . . . . Pages 45-64

CHAPTER V. THE APOCALYPSES UNMASKED — Political Oppression as Historic Background — Gospel of Despair — Priestly Literary Devices. §I. Priestly Theology of the Apocalypses. §II. The Persian and Jewish Apocalypses Compared. §III. Importance of True Interpretation of the Phrase "Son of Man" in Daniel. §IV. The Apocalyptic "Will to Exploit". . . Pages 65-75

CHAPTER VI. THE THEOLOGY OF JESUS — Introductory — The Critical Problems — Affinity with Prophetic Theology. §I. Jesus' Estimate of the Value of the Human Individual — The Soul of a Child — The "Least Brother" — The Outcast and Lowly — The Gentile — Contrast with Contemporary Jewish Opinion — "Son of Man" — Man Lord of the Sabbath — Man Greater than the Temple — Prof. Howison Quoted — Rejection of the Quest for Personal Salvation. §II. Jesus Holds to Prophetic Interpretation of History as Field for Working Out God's Plan for Mankind. §III. The Universalism of Jesus. §IV. Jesus' Theology Contrasts with Apocalyptic Theology. §V. Jesus and the Future World Community — Views of Schweitzer and K. Lake Examined — Jesus' Ethics and World Program. . . . . Pages 76-101

CHAPTER VII. "THE ESCHATOLOGICAL PROBLEM" — Critical Considerations. §I. Early Traces of Jesus' Anti-Apocalyptic Polemic — Quest for External "Signs" Condemned — "The Sign of Jonah" Signifies Repentance — An Internal Moral Sign — The Developmental Doctrine in "Q." §II. The Engrafting of Apocalyptic Matter Begins with the Disciples — Peter's *Christus Futurus* — The "Apocalypse of Jesus." §III. "The Great Apocalyptic Discourse" (Mk. XIII) — H. B. Streeter Quoted — Growth of the Apocalyptic Tradition in Matthew and Luke. §IV. Matthean "Eschatologizing" of Authentic Sayings of Jesus — Streeter — The "Apocalyptic Residuum" . . . . . Pages 102-119

CHAPTER VIII. THE HISTORIC JESUS — THE PROPHET MESSIAH. §I. The Beginnings of Christological Development: i, Jesus Appears as Prophetic Herald of the Kingdom of God; ii, Jesus Preached as the "Messiah That Is to Come"; iii, Retrospectively Regarded as Made the Messiah at His Baptism; iv, At His Birth; v, The Pauline "Man from Heaven"; vi, The Eternal Logos, Messiah, The Crucial Problem, The Messianic Self-Consciousness of Jesus as Revealed by Modern Research. §II. The Career of the Prophet Messiah — Kinship with Insurgent Prophets — Denounces the Exploiters — Derides Ceremonial Righteousness and Legalism — Proclaims the Righteous Community — His Campaign Against the Temple Cult — His Messianic Claim Revealed in the "Cleansing of the Temple." §III. The Program of Jesus — His Own Office as Initiator of the Reign of God — The "Johannine Passage" — The Militant Quality of His Mission — The Principle of Self-Sacrifice — His Absolute Ethic — The Victory of the Cross. . . . . Pages 120-148

CHAPTER IX. THE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS SUBSTITUTE A MESSIANIC CULT FOR HIS BROTHERHOOD OF THE KINGDOM — Introductory — The Initial Defeat of the Program of Jesus through the Tragic Misunderstanding of His Earliest Followers. §I. Reversion of the Jerusalem Church to the Apocalyptic Delusion and Loss of Prophetic Religion and Ethic — McGiffert Quoted — Peter and His Group Practically Abandon the Teacher's Cause. §II. The "Hellenistic Deacons" Are the True Interpreters of Jesus' Doctrine — Contrast to the Apostles — Prophetic Elements in the Discourse of Stephen — A Prophet Martyr — And in the Discourse of Philip — Influence on Antioch and so on the Antiochene Prophets — Barnabas and Saul. §III. Paul — His Attempted Synthesis of Opposing Religious Elements — Influence on the Expansion of the Cult — Paul, a "Hellenizing Syncretist" — Fails to Understand the Historic Significance of Jesus — His Affinity with the "Mystery Cults" — Percy Gardner Quoted — The Cult Principle Opposed to the Universal Type of Religion — Royce's Estimate Criticized — Ephesian Christianity, in the Fourth Gospel — Metamorphoses the Universal Religion of the Prophet-Messiah into a Christo-Centric Mystery Cult. . . . . Pages 149-168

CHAPTER X. THE CULT BECOMES AN EXPLOITING ECCLESIASTICISM — Introductory — External Organization and Spread of the Jesus Cult. §I. The Ministry in the Gentile Churches "Charismatic" — The Didache and Exploiting "Prophets." §II. The Oligarchical Type of Organization — "Heresies" — Ignatius and the Monarchical Episcopate. §III. Growth of a "Clerical Consciousness" — "Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons" — Growing Opportunities for Exploitation. §IV. The Age

of Cyprian — Roman Legalism Grafted upon Jewish Legalism — Revival of Old Testament Ceremonialism and Hierarchical Notions — Harnack Quoted — Cyprian and the Priests' Code — He Becomes Chief Agent in Leading the Catholic Church into Complete Apostasy from the Religion of Jesus. §V. The Church now Ripe for the Exploiter. §VI. Through Its Deal with Constantine the Church Enters upon a Profitable Career of Exploitation Not Yet Ended — Appendix to Chapter X — Quoted from Henry Osborn Taylor. . . Pages 169-190

CHAPTER XI. SOME CHRISTIAN INSURGENT PROPHETS — Introductory — Protestants Against the View of that Exploitation is a High Type of Piety. §I. Arnold of Brescia. §II. Francis of Assisi. §III. Dante — Mazzini Quoted — Marsiglio of Padua and John of Jandun. §IV. Prophetic Movement in England — William Langland — His Prophetic Allegory — John Wycliffe — The Peasant Priests — Thorold Rogers Quoted. §V. The Prophets of Bohemia — Palacky Quoted. §VI. The Prophetic Career of Savonarola — Vilari Quoted. §VII. The Oxford Reformers of 1496. . . . . Pages 191-213

CHAPTER XII. THE SO-CALLED REFORMATION. Introductory — Predominant Influence of Paulinism Restricts Reformation to the Cult — Excludes Reformation of the Social Order. §I. Martin Luther. §II. Calvin. §III. The English Reformation Perpetuates the Exclusive Cult Idea by Preservation and Exaltation of the Episcopate — Perpetuation of System of Exploitation — The Martin Mar-Prelate Charges — Bishops Held in Contempt by Elizabeth — Froude Quoted. §IV. "Anabaptists" Recover the True Type of Christianity and Attempt to Initiate the Social Reign of God — Persecuted by Protestants and Catholics Alike —



Heath Quoted — The Moravian Community — The Program and Spirit of Jesus Again Quenched in a Baptism of Blood and Fire. . . . . Pages 214-237

CHAPTER XIII. THE RECOVERY OF A LOST CHRISTIANITY. §I. Present Crisis in Conflict Between the Exploiters and Prophets of Religion. §II. The Stake — Is the Present Hell on Earth to Continue or the Reign of God to Triumph. §III. Jesus Still the Spiritual Guide and Leader of the Forces of the Reign of God. §IV. The Lesser Cults Must be Dethroned and Universal Christianity Restored, This the Only Practical Hope of World for Deliverance from Perpetual Wars — Hope from those Outside Historic Christianity. §V. The Present Futility of Existing Cults; They Could Help by Losing Their Lives for Christ's Sake and the Gospel's — Royce Quoted — Possibilities of. §VI. Education. §VII. Family and Parish Community. §VIII. The Lord's Prayer. §IX. Personal Immortality and the Social Order. §X. Conclusion — The Supreme Need — Universal Repentance and Reorganization of Individual and Social Life Under the Guidance of the Spirit of Jesus. . . . . Pages 238-256

## INTRODUCTION

THE highest types of human activity, spiritual, mental or physical, proceed from an inward constraint as their sufficient motive. Aspiration seeks attainment; thought impels to expression; the idea becomes the architect of its own enduring habitation. Virtue is not only its own reward but is its alone satisfying reward. It craves no other pay. It resents the offer of material reward as an affront—as imputing a hireling's motives to a true prophet.

But besides his incentives to creative or co-creative activity man has secondary and conditional requirements. These are commonly called the "necessities of life." They are the necessities of physical life. The higher forms of activity—religious, mental and artistic—often attract material rewards—and as these material things are required—and are often very gratifying—the man is under the constant temptation to regard the higher forms of activity as the legitimate means of procuring the material satisfactions. He is moved to make merchandise of the commodities of the spirit and if he yields he becomes a false prophet.

A subtle simony becomes his pursuing demon. He has made his compact with Mephistopheles and has sold his own soul. The artist turns peddler and exchanges his spiritual integrity for the flesh pots;

the philosopher turns sophist—wins popular favor and loses his self-respect; courtly love turns courtesan, and, most tragic of all, the prophet turns wizard and divines for hire.

The task of spiritualizing life consists primarily in placing all human activity and forms of service however humble in direct alignment with a central compelling spiritual motive that shall leaven the whole lump of individual and social activity. The professional or hireling must give place to the *amateur* or true lover. Ruskin has thus stated the issue: "It is the whole distinction in a man; distinction between life and death *in* him, between heaven and hell *for* him. You cannot serve two masters; you *must* serve one or the other. If your work is first with you, and your fee second, work is your master and the Lord of work, Who is God. But if your fee is first with you, and your work second, fee is your master, and the lord of fee who is the Devil; and not only the Devil, but the lowest of Devils—'the least erected fiend that fell.' So there you have it in brief terms: work first—you are God's servants; fee first—you are the Fiend's."<sup>1</sup>

In the following book I seek to state and trace the issue between the disinterested prophets of religion and those who have sought or been led to professionalize religion as a means to a career. I try to show the type of religion developed by its true and enlightened lovers in contrast to the type of religion developed under the more or less uncon-

<sup>1</sup>Ruskin, "The Crown of Wild Olive"—Lecture I.

scious or conscious "will to exploit" to the ends of personal, political, economic and caste aggrandizement.

The resultant analysis reveals a pure and unmixed type of a universal religion which is the core of Christianity. It separates the fundamental religion from its accessories and foreign adhesions and shows it in action against the enemies of mankind. This work should thus have an emancipating effect upon the religious spirit of many who are bound by the fetters of a hampering traditionalism. It should also move to a reconsideration of the central claims of religion those who have swept out the priceless jewel with the dust.

## I

THE key to an understanding of historic and social movements is to be found in the phenomena of leadership. On the higher plane, even democratic and co-operative enterprises, whose leaders are not imposed from above but brought forth from within, understand the importance of intelligent oversight and direction, however much they may seek to place restrictions upon the personal powers of their appointed heads. On a lower plane, the tribe, the clan, the band of marauders (at certain stages these words are synonyms) will follow the leadership of the one best qualified to help them attain their objects.

At times the leader by his superior strength, wisdom or craft may be able to exact tremendous toll

in return for his services. The opportunities for leadership are also opportunities for exploitation. In spite of his abuses of his position of advantage the leader may make himself felt as at least the lesser evil. He stands in the eyes of his followers between them and greater evils or dangers. His services and powers may even enable him to inspire a supreme loyalty—rising to hero-worship—and then his adherents become prepared to sacrifice to his obedience their dearest possessions—even life itself. In proportion as he can make himself indispensable in their eyes as a living condition of the attainment of of their highest aims or strongest desires, his opportunities for exploitation are multiplied.

The influence of a strong leader may persist and the power of his name may go on increasing after his death. The tradition of many tribes that their God was also their ancestor probably rests on an historic basis of fact. Through a process of deification the great leader of the past has come to be thought of as a living divine being or spirit still devoted to the cause of his people and exercising a divine guidance through his successors or through his representatives the priests and oracles of the tribal cult.<sup>1</sup> The taxes or the gifts which they paid or gave to their chief in his life are now offered in sacrifice to his spirit or paid to the guardians of his shrines.

<sup>1</sup> His return to earth as a deliverer may come to be anticipated in times of trouble. (Cf. King Arthur and Barbarossa legends and others similar.)

## II

In no field of human interest do men feel a greater need of leadership than in religion. Here their sense of ignorance and dependence is most complete.

Religion offers the most important and indispensable goods,—negatively, protection from threatened dangers of loss, sickness, premature death or from unknown dangers after death; positively, it offers consolation, guidance, hope, success, present power and perhaps an eternal heaven of bliss.

In religion the opportunities of leadership reach their climax—for good or for evil. The appeal made to the highest in man should lead to glorious attainments. But the appeal to ignorance, fear, superstition, credulity, cupidity, selfishness,—to the lower as well as to the better traits,—may be utilized by religious exploiters to their own advantage and to the everlasting detriment of those who are brought under their control.

## III

With minor exceptions religion is organized on the group principle—it belongs to a tribe, a nation, a cult, or transcends national boundaries as a church. Its leaders seek and sometimes win a monopoly of its dispensation. Sometimes we see the struggle for this monopoly in process—now almost unopposed, again encountering fierce resistance. The opposition may come from either of two sources, from a rival “secular” or political leadership which also wishes a monopoly of exploitation, or from a dif-

ferent type of religion truly devoted to the welfare of men and seeking to destroy the leadership of the exploiters and substitute a disinterested leadership, based upon a higher conception of the deity as the beneficent Guide of all mankind, a leadership aiming at the emancipation of the downmost common man and his highest social and spiritual elevation. This type of religion not only opposes the exploiting of religious leaders, but it opposes exploitation of every kind—whether by kings, the aristocracy, the military feudal caste, or the money power.<sup>1</sup>

The religious leader of this type is known as the Prophet and he early made his appearance in the history of Israel. He is the spokesman of God and of the common people to whose cause God is devoted. He presents a theology incomparably higher than the theology which the priests have manipulated in the interests of their own power and control. He denies all their claims of monopoly, of their position as middlemen between the Producer of all benefits and the dependent consumer. He declares that the tickets of admission sold by the priests—their oracles, ceremonials, implements of divination, the sacrifices demanded by them, are fraudulent. He declares that no tickets are required—that every man has the right of free access to the God Who loves him and his fellows and wishes them well. In thus

<sup>1</sup>Frequently priests and princes pool their interests in the game of exploitation. At times prophetic reformers have sought to co-operate with the "secular power" to limit religious exploitation.

denouncing the powerful exploiting classes the prophet not only spurns the fees of religion but he encounters the gravest personal dangers. His only safety lies in the success of his appeal to the consciences of the wrong-doers in high places or in winning the backing of the people. Some prophets by these means have worked and taught in a measure of security, but as a rule the world-prophets have also been the world-martyrs because the exploiting classes have hardened their consciences and preferred to follow their exploitations rather than obey the Voice of God. Their favorite method has always been to discredit the prophet in the eyes of the people to whose cause he was devoted, by accusing him of being a heretic and a blasphemer—and then putting him out of the way by the death penalty—the people having been cowed and detached from their leader through superstitious fear of the hierarchy's claims, or well-grounded fear of its political power.

#### IV

The conflict between the prophetic and exploiting types of religion early passed over from Judaism into the history of Christianity. It represents a permanent alignment and is the religious issue the grasping of which is of supreme importance both to the intellectual apprehension of what Christianity is, and to its practical application as a program of human salvation, individual and social, economic and spiritual.

Naturally the question of supreme importance to



our study is the place of Jesus in relation to the prophetic type of religion. To the Christian as well as to the student of religion no questions can be more vital than (1) how Jesus stood in relation to the exploiters of religion in His Own day; (2) how He embodied and perfected the prophetic spirit of religion and expanded it to the widest reach of Catholicism (in its original sense of Universalism); (3) how He would by inference regard those who overlaid His prophetic initiation of the Kingdom of God by founding an exploiting ecclesiasticism based upon His Person as the God of a cult; (4) where and how the influence of Jesus is to be manifested in the present struggle between the prophetic and exploiting types of religion and in the extension of that struggle to the wider field of conflict between the people and their leaders who seek their emancipation from political, economic, social, intellectual and spiritual restrictions, on the one side, and those self-imposed leaders and masters who strive to increase the power of those restrictions that they and their class may continue to enjoy special privileges with their concomitant opportunities for exploitation, on the other.

## V

The object of this book, as its title suggests, is a study of the historic conflict between the two types of religion which we have designated as prophetic and exploiting. It further seeks to ascertain the theological aspects and implications of the contest—

to do justice to the theological permanence, veracity and breadth of vision of prophetism and to show how the theologies of hierarchies and ecclesiasticisms were influenced or manipulated in the interests of the will to exploit.

## VI

In Jesus we find the supreme development of the prophetic type of religion. In order to vindicate this claim it has been necessary to show in how far some of even His earliest adherents misconceived or misrepresented Him. We have also been compelled, in this interest, to introduce what may seem to some on first sight as a diversion—namely, a careful analysis of that degenerate and bizarre metamorphosis of prophetism into apocalypticism—(the attempt of priestly writers to masquerade as prophets), and the assertion of certain modern critics that the Gospel of Jesus gave its adherence to this typical gospel of hate and despair.

In this study both psychology and criticism must be employed as effectively as the capacity of the student of these problems will permit.

## VII

It is a great, sometimes an unconscious, tribute which men in every age and of the widest variety of opinions have paid to the moral leadership of Christ, by claiming Him as the embodiment or Advocate of their highest ideals and fondest dreams. How great is the range of these claimants! The Cross of the Prince of Peace, on which He prayed for the

forgiveness of His enemies, was taken as the emblem of bloody conquest by the red-handed Constantine, and the term "Crusade," derived from the Cross, became the synonym for war, rape and rapine—the criminal agents being fortified with plenary indulgences! Weapons of destruction have been blest in the Name of the Crucified. At the opposite pole the anchorite, monk and friar have worshipped an ascetic Christ in their own image, renouncing present joy to save their souls for pleasures eternal. Even the Mohammedans have a Gospel of their own (a pseudepigraphical "Gospel of Barnabas") which gives the Mohammendan interpretation of Jesus. In it Jesus is made to say in the presence of the High Priest "I am Jesus of Nazareth, born of Mary, of the stock of David, a mortal man, and fear God and seek His honor and glory." He also disclaims the title of Messiah and foretells the coming of Mohammed.<sup>1</sup> Philosophical anarchists like Tolstoy, social reformers like Bouck White and Bernard Shaw, have found their own dreams in Jesus the Carpenter. More recently, the decadent George Moore<sup>2</sup> has invented a frankly fictitious Christ and in His mouth has placed expressions that reflect his own anti-Christian, futile philosophy, while H. G. Wells has read into Jesus' sympathy for "fallen women" a support for his own doctrine of sex license.

<sup>1</sup>(Ch. 96.) Quoted in article in *Journal of Theological Studies*—April, 1902—p. 446, "On the Mohammedan Gospel of Barnabas" by W. A. E. Axon, LL.D.

<sup>2</sup>In "The Brook Kerith."

## VIII

In the modern age the cause of prophetism has received great furtherance and emancipation from dogmatic and ecclesiastical control through the triumphant progress of scientific, historical and literary criticism of the sources of the Old and New Testament, and the scientific study of Church history. We are thereby enabled to observe not only the decorated tombs of the prophets or to think of them as the merely temporary and subordinate foretellers of coming events, but as the real co-operators with God, who prepared the way for the coming of His reign on earth. Their message is thereby rescued from the scrap heap and given permanent value.

We are also enabled to see the inside of the less edifying process whereby the hierarchy of exploiters falsified history and perverted the teaching about the Nature and Will of God in the interests of their caste pre-eminence.

The extension of this process of study should by its emancipation of the prophetic spirit culminate in the present and future in the birth of a new race of prophetic leaders and the realization of the triumph of their cause, the cause of the People, the cause of Jesus, named by Him the Cause of the Kingdom of God.



RELIGION—ITS PROPHETS AND  
FALSE PROPHETS



# Religion: Its Prophets and False Prophets

## CHAPTER I

### RISE OF THE JEWISH PRIESTHOOD

THERE is a well grounded opinion that if we could know the stories of the rise of all the historic priesthoods we should find in them a marked similarity of movement. We are on fairly safe ground in taking the case of the Jewish priesthood as typical. It certainly shows analogies to what we know of the rise of the Christian priesthood.

Court "historians" in the Imperial East have written their epics to show that Emperors are lineal descendants of the gods (and in the West we have the *Æneid* of Virgil).

The official "Chroniclers" of priestly castes have written with a similar intention—to show the direct Divine origin of the priesthoods. In thus providing the *parvenus* with the desired lineage some historical facts were used in making a mosaic chart of the family tree.

In the Pentateuch (or Hexateuch) we have such a mosaic, and the Biblical antiquarian desiring to recover a true picture of the past has in his quest incidentally uncovered the literary devices employed by the priests to advance their own power and prestige.



By the help of the historical and literary critics we are enabled to get first a picture of the primitive democratic and decentralized religion—and then to see the movement of the priestly exploiters as it arose and developed into a centralized aristocratic theocracy.

## I

When the ancestors of the Israelites were living in the nomadic stage—that is, in the “Age of the Patriarchs”—there was no established or centralized priesthood.

“Among the nomadic Semites, to whom the Hebrews belonged before they settled in Canaan, there has never been any settled priesthood. The acts of religion partake of the general simplicity of desert life. Apart from the private worship of household gods and the oblations and salutations offered at the graves of departed kinsmen, the ritual observances of the ancient Arabs were visits to the tribal sanctuary to salute the god with a gift of milk, first-fruits, or the like, the sacrifice of firstlings and vows, and an occasional pilgrimage to discharge a vow at the annual feast and fair of one of the more distant holy places. These acts required no priestly aid. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

The stories of the Patriarchs in the earliest writings of the Hexateuch exhibit similar conditions. There were no Hebrew priests. From the Code

<sup>1</sup> Article by Prof. W. R. Smith and Prof. A. Bertholet in *Encyclopædia Biblica*, Vol. III, Col. 3839.

of the Covenant compiled in the 8th Century B.C. (the earliest written document of the Hebrew customary law—Ex. 20:20, 23:23), we find that the primitive nomadic ordinances continued in force for a long time after the settlement in Palestine. There is as yet no mention of a priestly caste. The head of the family naturally acted as the officiant, but any male member of the family might offer sacrifice when absent on a journey. The form of altar prescribed was such that it might be erected anywhere in a short time. It was to be made of unhewn stones or of earth. The offerings consisted of the first fruits of the fields, and first-born of the herds. It is nowhere implied that this early offering was regarded as an atonement for sins.<sup>1</sup> “The sacrifices and offerings were acknowledgments of the divine bounty and means used to insure its continuance . . . .”<sup>2</sup>

“Each man slew his own victim and divided the sacrifice in his own circle; the share of the god was the blood which was smeared upon or poured out beside a stone set up as an altar. . . . It does not appear that any portion of the sacrifice was burned on the altar, or that any part of the victim was the due of the sanctuary.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The commandment to offer the firstborn son as a sacrifice (Ex. 22:29) does not belong in this document. It was a later provision borrowed from the Assyrian cultus, and denounced by the prophets—(Micah 6:7).

<sup>2</sup>Article “Priest” in *Encyl. Biblica*, cited above.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

#### 4     *Religion: Its Prophets and False Prophets*

The description of the Arab sacrificial customs seems to fit the conditions among the Israelites in their nomadic or early agricultural condition.

The Hebrews identified the blood with the life. This was, therefore, returned to the Life-giver as His portion. It was a sacrilege to eat the blood. This seems to indicate a reverence for the mystery of life—in itself an instinctive religious motive. It is probable that whenever an animal was killed for food this ceremony was a form of “grace before meat.”

## II

The primitive Semitic religion was a lay religion.<sup>1</sup>

The patriarchs were men of prayer. Such of their prayers as are contained in Genesis breathe a beautiful spirit of intimacy with Jehovah and a consciousness of His everpresent accessibility and guidance in regard to the practical affairs of life. A beautiful illustration is found in the story of Abraham's servant's quest for the right wife for Isaac<sup>2</sup> (a matter of vast importance in the eyes of later generations whose ancestress was about to be selected).

In this assumption of God's nearness and accessibility we find the roots of the democratic strain in the later Hebrew religion. Both the God-con-

<sup>1</sup>It is interesting to recall that in Mohammedanism, though it became an exploiting religion, there is no provision for a sacerdotal caste. The original Arab democracy is safeguarded and perpetuated.

<sup>2</sup>Gen. 24.

sciousness of the prophets and the devotional appeal of the Psalm-writers find their warrant here. Men who pray to the same God find in their common worship the strongest tie of solidarity. The group consciousness is strengthened and elevated at the same time.

Common prayer and worship beget the highest type of loyalty, become a source of strength and comfort, and tend to uplift the human spirit, even though the theological ideas of the worshippers may be crude and imperfect. The discovery of the law of self-suggestion by modern psychology shows how religious beliefs and practices, even when illfounded in objective facts, may automatically produce highly beneficial results. Of course the limitation of this primitive religion lay in the tribal conception. It produced or strengthened at best a sense of tribal solidarity and was divisive in relation to the solidarity of the human race. The latter doctrine had to wait till the belief in the tribal God had been superseded by the prophetic belief in the One God, the Creator and Source of all mankind.

### III

As the prophetic religion had its historic roots in the patriarchal God-consciousness, so the exploiting religion grew up about the local sacred places scattered through the desert oases and the hill country. The early priestly families, represented by Melchisedec, Jethro, perhaps Balaam,

and others, were guardians of the sacred places connected with early theophanies in which God had manifested Himself with particular vividness. Where God had once been so clearly shown, His Presence might again be sought with the best expectations. Moreover, the visitor at the shrine did not have to depend upon a private revelation which might be delayed or wholly withheld.

The guardians of the shrine had in their keeping certain sacred instruments of divination by means of which they professed to be able surely to ascertain from God the information desired. They claimed to be able to find the Divine Will and purpose registered in the flight of birds or the entrails of sacrificial animals. If the right omens were not found in the first sacrificial animal there was hope that they might occur in later victims after the number of the sacrifices had been able to effect a desired change of attitude on the part of the god. (Witness the unavailing persistence of Balak in his dealings with the priest Balaam. When a number of animals were thus sacrificed it would naturally follow that the priestly larder would be well stocked.) Moreover, the ability to manipulate the sacred lot opened an opportunity for influence on the part of the diviner which readily lent itself to exploitation.

Not only the rewards of the priests but also their influence was greatly enhanced as they came to be consulted in matters of growing importance. It seems a small matter that Rebekah should "inquire of God" (the technical expression for con-

sulting the oracle) about the meaning of the alarming symptoms of her pregnancy. But the smaller occasion might lead to the greater. Saul who goes to inquire about his father's strayed asses through Samuel finds, through the medium of the oracle, the kingship of the Israelites. He also finds the asses.

The sanctuary had long had its chief significance as the seat of judgment. The Hebrew law was a judge-made law. In quarrels, disputes, and dissensions, the parties laid their case before the priest whose decisions were theoretically the decisions of Jehovah Himself. Thus the law was regarded as a Divine law.<sup>1</sup> This was given especial prominence when Moses sat to judge the people. Later all the decisions, precedents, and even new decisions and innovations, came to be regarded as proceeding from him. The Mosaic tradition was claimed by the later highly developed priestly colleges and nothing was deemed authoritative unless it could claim the sanction of his name. After the monarchy the priests still retained their judicial powers and functions and this gave them their political influence. The claim to act as fountains of Divine judgment gave the priests an opportunity to sway affairs of state and that they sometimes used fraud even our records admit. Saul and David and later kings took no important steps without consulting the oracle. The sense of dependence even on the

<sup>1</sup>The word "Torah"—later applied to the whole Jewish law—is derived from a Hebrew word meaning to "cast a (sacred) lot."

part of kings is shown in the case of Saul—who, when he could get no response through the disaffected priests “neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by the soothsayers” (I Samuel 28 f), resorted in desperation to the “Witch of Endor.”

As to the use of fraud we are frankly told that Elisha, the man of God, sent a lying oracle to Benhadad king of Syria (II Kings 8:8)—a thing held to be legitimate in dealing with an enemy. Moreover it is not only the soothsayer who is credited with the use of justifiable fraud—but even Jehovah Himself. This idea is not only found in that early account of Jehovah’s making use of a lying spirit in order to mislead four hundred soothsayers that they might entice Ahab to his death<sup>1</sup>—but so high and late an authority as Ezekiel tells us that Jehovah Himself sometimes falsified the oracle.<sup>2</sup>

If the priests (Ezekiel was of their number) could believe deception legitimate on the part of God—how should lying not also be justified as means to desired ends, on the part of God’s representatives—i.e. themselves? Nothing could more conclusively discredit the priestly veracity than their conception of a God Who now and then resorted to lies. This is but a plain instance of men creating God in their own image. Moreover, it justified them, in their own eyes, in their falsification of theology and of history.

<sup>1</sup>I Kings 22—and II Chronicles 18.

<sup>2</sup>“If the prophet be deceived, I, Jehovah, have deceived that prophet.” (Ezek. 14:19.)

## IV

Before turning to the rise of the literary prophets in the Eighth Century B.C., let us rapidly sketch the emergence of the priestly caste after the settlement in Palestine and its growth as an exploiting power in the days of Amos who denounces it in unmistakable terms as an exploiting and corrupt hierarchy utterly faithless to God and to the Cause of His people.

A primitive account of the rise of an early line of priests is found in the story of Micah's "private chaplain" in Judges 17 and 18: Micah is a man of wealth and, as he can afford it, he is anxious to have a priest of his own to consult the oracle for him and so bring him knowledge whereby his prosperity may be still further increased. He has an image or images made of silver (with no consciousness that this would displease Jehovah Whose favor he is seeking). He himself makes the ephod and teraphim—the instruments of divination. For the lack of a better he, though a layman, sets his own son apart as his priest. He thinks a visiting Levite from Bethlehem would make a better priest and so he deposes his son and consecrates the Levite in his place. He is immensely pleased with the new minister. But the latter for his part is serving his own interests. He is discovered by some Danites who are looking for a favorable place to found a settlement. They consult the oracle through him and get a favorable response.



Later they return with their fellow tribesmen, rob Micah of his whole ecclesiastical outfit, priest, images, ephod and teraphim. Thereby they secure the favor of Jehovah for themselves. The young priest is not outraged by the treatment of his former patron (whom for some reason he had not forewarned) but "his heart was glad"<sup>1</sup> at this "call to a larger field of usefulness."

A later gloss written after the captivity tells us that this priest was the founder of the Danite priesthood, that he was "Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses," and that his descendants continued to be priests to the Danites till the captivity.<sup>2</sup>

The striking thing about this story is that the fact of exploitation is at once so conspicuous and so uncondemned. What a moral chasm between Moses and his alleged grandson! And what a founder to claim for a legitimate line of priests! If the head be corrupt what of the members!<sup>3</sup>

At a later date and on a larger scale we find the same element of exploitation in the story of the priests of Shiloh. But in this case there is an implied condemnation on the part of the author who exhibits the feeling of the people as outraged by the conduct of the wicked sons Hophni and Phineas of the "good" but weak priest Eli. At this stage of development the laity still have the right to offer their own sacrifices at the shrine of which the priests

<sup>1</sup>Judges 18: 30.

<sup>2</sup>Judges 18: 30.

<sup>3</sup>The brief genealogy is probably fictitious.

are the guardians. We are plainly told that the layman Elkanah, future father of Samuel, thus sacrificed in his turn. The bad priests offended by insolently helping themselves to whatever they liked of the sacrificial victims as well as by seducing whom they could of the female worshippers.

In reading this narrative we have to allow for the fact that it is being retold by a later writer devoted to the claim of the Jerusalem priesthood to have the only legitimate right to the succession. The prophecy of the "man of God" that the priestly house of Eli (nothing is said of Samuel) was to be degraded and punished, and a "faithful priest" to be raised up in its stead, is by critics held to have been introduced as a warrant for the later suppression of that particular line by Solomon. It is suspected that this later editor blackened the character of these priests and made them appear worse than others—in order to justify their later suppression. However, after Shiloh was destroyed by the Philistines some of the descendants of Eli appear as priests at the shrine of Nob (I Samuel 21:2). They are represented as supporters of the claims of David as against Saul who on that account sought to have the whole priestly clan massacred and all but succeeded, for Abiathar alone escaped—the sole survivor. He remained faithful to David and on the latter's accession to the throne became High Priest. Other men were now elevated to the priesthood—among them Zadok the founder of the most powerful and enduring line of priests. He suc-

ceeded to the High Priesthood on the death of David. While the succession to the throne was still unsettled Abiathar advocated the claims of David's son Adonijah—whereas Zadok, with better fortune, stood by Solomon. On the latter's accession Abiathar was banished. Thus the line of Eli was superseded by the "faithful priest" referred to in the interpolated prophecy about the house of Shiloh.

Zadok (to whom the Sadducees traced their origin and from whom they took their name) seems to have been complacent in regard to the royal behavior. He presided over a wonderful temple and did not worry about the monarch's wives or the houses built by the king for the worship of their gods. His descendants carried exploitation to its greatest efficiency and later writers of their group provided their ancestor with a genealogy reaching back to Aaron, brother of Moses.

## CHAPTER II

## THE RISE OF PROPHETISM

THE progress of priestly exploitation did not go on unresisted. Before we continue the story to its climax we will take account of the opposition which was soon in full swing.

The prophetic religion was a distinct type from the priestly. It was not merely a movement of opposition, or protest, though it developed positively and constructively through its conflict with its opposite. Beginning as the religion of one people it continually expanded until it became a free, universal religion. It finds its epitome and final development in the teaching of Jesus. The priestly religion, on the other hand, tended to become more and more exclusive, monopolistic and oppressive.

There are three aspects of prophetism which we have to consider in this chapter: (1) its hereditary origin as an independent religious type; (2) its conflict with its opposite; and (3) the resulting type of prophetic consciousness. The chapter following this will be devoted to the permanent contribution of prophetism to theology and ethics.

## I

We have already noted that the germs of prophetic religion are found in the patriarchal. The patriarchs were men of prayer, consciously com-

muning with Jehovah, receiving direct guidance in answer to prayer. This guidance concerned the welfare of the tribal family of which the patriarch was the head. Guidance is a prophetic note. Jehovah is the God of the people, and the internal social development of the people is His concern. "The religion of the prophet is to be considered as an inner evolution of the Israelite religion itself."<sup>1</sup>

This concern of Jehovah for the internal well-being of the tribe, is, in principle, social and democratic. Though the patriarch governs, his rule is for the benefit of the governed. He is a father, not an exploiter of his people. The patriarch is a layman—but a God-conscious layman. The prophet is also a God-conscious layman, but without the patriarchial authority to govern. He endeavors, however, to make the guidance and authority of Jehovah the standard of the people's conduct. The original type of the prophet was called the "seer."<sup>2</sup>

He had this in common with the primitive priest, that both delivered oracles when the people came to consult Jehovah through them. But whereas the priest used the sacred lot, the seer, as the name implies, was regarded as having direct insight or clairvoyance into the mind of Jehovah.

If the earlier seers ever used the sacred lot (which may be regarded as a sort of ancient equivalent of

<sup>1</sup>Carl Marti; *The Religion of the Old Testament, Its Place Among the Religions of the Nearer East*, G. P. Putnam Sons, 1914, p. 124.

<sup>2</sup>I Sam. 9:9.

the modern Ouija board) the later prophets discarded all such instruments of divination and consulted Jehovah in prayer.

The prophets Samuel, Elijah and Elisha are represented as exerting direct influence upon political affairs. The latter two seemed to have been like great magicians, knowing the future and knowing how to influence the forces of nature. The Deuteronomist seems to feel that it is the strict province of the prophet simply to predict. If his predictions come true he is a genuine prophet. If they fail he is a false, presumptuous prophet, and is to be put to death.<sup>1</sup>

A prophet who confined his activities to the endeavor to foretell future events might serve the purposes of the priestly caste. But prediction was a matter of relatively small moment with the literary prophets. They concerned themselves with the present, as religious and moral teachers; they combated evils and so were dangerous. It was easy to charge them with being false prophets, if even the form of trial were given them, and to convict them by a "packed" priestly jury and sentence them to death by a priestly tribunal.

The term "prophet" is applied in the Old Testament to two distinct types of men, and these need to be distinguished. There were those who represented the free, democratic clan brotherhood and the nomadic tradition of Israel. They had their homes in the hills where the simpler forms of social

<sup>1</sup>Deut. 18: 20, 22.

tuting a new mishpat for the old covenant of Jehovah. There are very specific charges in the indictment and there is little doubt that they were well founded.

(1) The prophets are bitter in their denunciation of the elaborate sacrificial ceremonial. Jeremiah explicitly states that Jehovah gave no commandment to the fathers of Israel in regard to sacrifice. The elaborate priestly ceremonial is thus an innovation. What Jehovah did command was simple obedience to the guidance of His living Voice.<sup>1</sup> Hosea interprets Jehovah as saying: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice."<sup>2</sup>

Micah declares that Jehovah desires nothing in the way of sacrifice but instead justice, mercy and humility. Amos and Isaiah give full descriptions of the elaborated cultus, every detail of which is described as nauseating to Jehovah.<sup>3</sup>

(2) The kings and the ruling classes are grouped together in many prophetic denunciations. They are recognized as members of the same conspiracy of exploitation. The prophets were anti-monarchical and in favor of maintaining the democratic clan brotherhood. Especially bitter were Amos and Jeremiah in dealing with the sins of particular kings whom the priests called "the Lord's annointed." The priests are blamed for the support given by them to evil kings and nobles.

<sup>1</sup> Jer. 7: 22, 23.

<sup>2</sup> Hosea 6: 6.

<sup>3</sup> Amos 5: 21 ff, Isa. 1: 11, ff.

(3) Hosea emphasizes the charge of ignorance of Jehovah on the part of the priests. Not knowing Jehovah they are practically godless. If they had known Him they could not have been guilty of the crimes they commit—perjury, murder, theft, adultery, housebreaking, and violence.<sup>1</sup>

(4) The prophets also accused the priests of capitalizing the sins of the people so as to make revenue for themselves through “indulgences.” As Hosea puts it: “They get a living from the sins of my people and their desire is toward the people’s guilt.”<sup>2</sup>

(5) The same prophet is most explicit in charging that the priests have introduced licentious rites, borrowed from heathen peoples. The daughters of the Israelites were thus led to “commit whoredom, and their wives to commit adultery.”<sup>3</sup>

(6) One of the most serious and far-reaching charges made by the prophets against the priests is that they perverted justice at its fountain head in accepting bribes in rendering corrupt judicial decisions. That is the meaning underlying the scornful allusion to “gifts” in Isaiah 1: 23, and to “rewards” in Micah 3: 11, 7: 3, Isa. 5: 23, and elsewhere. In modern phrase the priests accepted “petty graft.”

Not only was nearly every thinkable crime charged against the priests but the prophets hold

<sup>1</sup> Hosea 4: 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Hosea 4: 8.

<sup>3</sup> Hosea 4: 12, 13.



them responsible for the ignorance and low moral state of the people who looked to them for leadership. So great do they regard the evil of the priestly influence that they are sure that Jehovah is determined upon the complete removal of the priesthood. "But with you, O ye priests, will I go to judgment. . . . My people is destroyed because it has no knowledge; therefore, will I spurn you that ye may be my priests no more. And since ye have cast the mishpat of your God out of your minds I will also cast your children out of my mind."<sup>1</sup> This is a prophecy of the complete doom of the priestly line.

What the priests are accused of neglecting, the prophets undertook themselves to do; to denounce heathen customs, to bring the people out of their ignorance of Jehovah, to show His wrath against immoral practices, to rebuke evil kings and exploiting aristocrats, to teach the true mishpat, justice, mercy and truth; to show Jehovah's disgust at the ceremonial, to enkindle the consciences of sinners by warning of the impending discipline of Jehovah in which He will employ the agency of conquering nations. They went on to show that the cultus was no protection, as the priests claimed it was, against the threatened invasion of world powers that would lead the sinful people into captivity. Jehovah would use these very enemies against whom the priests were promising protection, to punish the misguided people for their neglect of the true mish-

<sup>1</sup> Hosea 4: 4-7.

pat. The king, aristocrats, and their priestly supporters, the prophets declared, would be the first to suffer. Only the righteous, or at least the penitent, would escape the threatened disaster, and from these survivors, who would have learned through discipline truly to know Jehovah, He would build up a truly righteous nation to fulfil His Will.

Before calamities fell the prophets warned of them and sought to avert them by moving the people to repentance. After they had befallen the prophets sought to drive home the lessons and then gave themselves to the mission of consolation and to proposing a program for the reestablishment of the nation on a lasting foundation of righteousness. In this epoch they became the interpreters of the lessons of world history in which they read the unfolding Will of Jehovah, and their appreciation of the interpretation of history enabled them to make one of their most important permanent contributions to theological truth.

On the practical side the prophetic principle that corruption destroys any vestige of claim to moral and religious leadership is of fundamental importance to all reforming movements. It is the safeguard of religious liberty. It sets aside the priestly contention that God's gift of authority to teach and rule is inalienable—a non-forfeitable vested right. The subsequent claim of the Catholic Church that the unworthiness of the priest does not affect the "validity" of the sacrament is based upon this contention that corruption does not even break the

monopolistic control of the channels of access to Divine favor. The object is to force the righteous layman to come even to the evil priest in order to have any transaction with the Deity.

The prophet claims that no one, no matter what his priestly claims, can represent God to another, apart from a penitent life striving to know, to do, and to reveal God's Will. The priestly hall-mark is in itself an infringement, a usurpation. The conditions of attaining religious leadership are open to all.

The priestly and prophetic claims appear mutually irreconcilable. The prophets demand the elimination of the whole ecclesiastical machine. The priests retort with charges of blasphemy or heresy and demand that the prophets be stoned. Jeremiah 2:30 and Nehemiah 9:26 bear witness to the frequency of the prophetic martyrdoms and Jesus points out that it is in Jerusalem (where the priests have the control) that the prophets must expect nothing but death.

The prophet's honor is paid him, not in his lifetime, but by building monuments over his ashes and putting flowers upon his grave.

### III

We now turn from the external conflicts of the prophets to seek the inspirational sources within the prophetic souls and then to contrast the prophetic with the priestly psychology.

The starting point of the prophet's career is

mystic experience. God seeks the prophet and the prophet is thereby led to seek God. The God-seeker becomes the God-knower. As prophetic experience accumulates and widens and the God-knowledge deepens, the fact that God is One is clearly revealed. The prophet further learns that God, with whom he communes in prayer, is also teaching mankind through the movements of world history. God speaking within the soul and God working in human relations thus offers two distinct channels of enlightenment. The internal-individual and external-social experiences are mutually interpretive. From his consciousness that God is One the prophet advances to the knowledge that all mankind is but one family. God has no ultimate favorites. If He bestows favors upon one nation it is in order that the favored ones may communicate their privileges to all the rest.

Thus God has a plan for the whole world, and He calls upon men to the work of getting that plan accomplished. The prophet discovers that it is his own function to interpret this plan to his fellows and win their co-operation in its furtherance. In this he does not seek to make God useful to himself, as is the custom of priestly religion, but seeks to become useful to God. In place of the primitive sense of sin—which is associated with ceremonial uncleanness rather than with moral lapses—the prophetic consciousness of sin becomes rather a sense of failure in living up to the responsibility of co-operating with God in righting the wrongs of the world. In the

prophetic consciousness we find that the conception of sin is no longer merely personal, but through the new-born sense of responsibility, it has also become social. Isaiah combines these two aspects of sin when he says: "Woe is me, for I am undone, for I am a man of sinful life and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips."<sup>1</sup> The consciousness of the personal guilt of sins of omission comes out in the narrative of the prophetic call. It is the prophet's share of the burden of social guilt. He blames himself for the sins of the people. He takes upon himself voluntarily the burden of their removal. This is not to be accomplished by the easy method of shedding of blood of sacrificial victims, or burnt offerings. God does not ask to be compensated for the injury which men have done Him. Instead He desires to forget the past freely and make a new beginning. He desires the free services of men united in the effort to prevent sin and evil. He needs messengers and initiators of His program of repentance and a new life.

The Word of God, the Spirit of God, the Vision of God comes to men as men. The prophets are laymen who are instructed directly of God and they make their appeal to men as beings who are responsible to God. They look forward to the day when all men will receive the appeal of God directly from the divine Spirit.<sup>2</sup>

The attitude of the prophet toward his fellows

<sup>1</sup> Isa. 6: 5.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Jer. 31: 33, Joel 2: 28 f. See also, Numbers 11: 29.

becomes thus identically God's attitude toward them. His personal interests become identified with God's interests. The solidarity between his own interests and those of God, between God's interests and those of every member of the human race makes the thought of exploitation in the name of religion a moral impossibility. For the prophet to use his knowledge of God for private ends becomes logically impossible. His knowledge of God itself teaches him that God utterly condemns all forms of exploitation. Exploitation can rest only upon a false conception of God or complete ignorance of Him. On the contrary, the prophet's knowledge of God entails a life of fearless sacrifice in His cause. Thus the prophets become the world's martyrs. The readiness to die for their cause is a conspicuous element in the prophetic psychology.

Priesthood develops externally in elaborated ceremonial, sacred vestments, a self-perpetuating hierarchy. Prophetism develops internally in a deeper knowledge of God and a growing sense of individual responsibility to Him. Priesthood seeks to control the avenues of approach to God through rites and practices which none but priests have the knowledge or skill or right to perform. It thus seeks to make itself essential to intercourse with God. Prophetism seeks to know God through the internal, personal or mystical approach and to impart the secret of that approach to all men. Priesthood seeks to make itself indispensable and permanent. Prophetism seeks to be inclusive and to make of every last

man a mystical God-knower. The priest seeks to interpose himself as a permanent, autocratic mediator between God and the soul. The prophet seeks to mediate temporarily by way of interpretation in order that his mediation may be rendered permanently superfluous.

The prophet is a striking combination of conscious weakness and a sense of power. Having identified himself with God's cause he is destined to share in God's triumphs no matter what individual or personal fate may overtake him in this life. He may fail in time but he has succeeded eternally. He belongs in the eternal order even in the midst of time. It is this consciousness which enables him to understand how history must ultimately unfold. His insight into the future is not concerned with individual happenings which he may predict, but with the larger questions of human destiny. "The prophet is but the mystic in control of the forces of history, declaring their necessary outcome; the mystic in action is the prophet."<sup>1</sup> "Prophetic power is the final evidence to each individual that he is right and real. It is his assurance of salvation; it is his share of divinity; it is his anticipation of all attainment."<sup>2</sup>

The prophet finds out what he is for. God formed Jeremiah in the womb to become His prophet. The prophet is conscious at first of his

<sup>1</sup>Hocking, "The Meaning of God in Human Experience," p. 511.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* p. 512.

own spiritual infancy, the insufficiency of his personal power to respond to the momentous call. But the call itself elicits from a latent divine gift—the growing strength necessary to respond to it. As this develops it culminates in the consciousness of “power from on High.” Jehovah says: “Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth: see, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms to pluck up and break down and to destroy and to overthrow and to build and to plant.”<sup>1</sup>

The prophet believes, as did the ancient patriarch, that the immediate guidance of God is a permanent factor in individual and social life. Here he again breaks with the priest, who teaches that the law, as a permanent external whole, was once delivered to the ancestors of the race. This law may not be changed, however much it may be elaborated and its application extended.

The prophet believes that instead of a law—impersonal and unchanging—communicated as a complete whole by God in the past, God progressively, through the inspired insight of religious leaders, teaches right principles of conduct and courses of action.

The priestly conception of the “Torah” develops into legalism a form of law-worship or idolatry. The law is regarded as existing as an end in itself. Man is regarded as existing for the law, whereas the prophet regards the law as existing for the benefit of man.

<sup>1</sup>Jer. I: 10,



Against legalism the prophet urges a living spiritual and moral guidance. Those who are sufficiently in earnest may discover the law of God written in their own inward parts.<sup>1</sup> To the spiritually awakened ear the command comes "Hearken to my voice."<sup>2</sup> This living voice proclaims moral responsibility reaching far beyond the precepts of the written law. It teaches principles instead of enacting legislation—such living principles as love to God and love to fellow man. It is not forcing the meaning of Jeremiah to say that the Voice of God to which he urges allegiance is none other than the voice of the divinely enlightened conscience.

Having seen the connection of prophetism with the ancient Israelitish religion, having seen it in action against its opposite—developed out of the Amorite soil, and having studied the main elements of its psychology, we now turn to its permanent theological and ethical contributions.

<sup>1</sup>Jer. 31: 33.

<sup>2</sup>Jer. 11: 4.

## CHAPTER III

## PROPHETIC THEOLOGY AND ETHIC

THE source of the prophetic insight is no less than God Himself. As we have already seen the channels through which that insight comes are two—the direct, through mystical personal experience, and the indirect—through history or the collective experience of the race.

God is the Source from Which all men and all things have arisen. God is the destiny to which all men and all things are to return on a higher plane. Meanwhile men have to fight their way along the arduous and perilous spiral of existence and need guidance and help in so doing. There are five great ideas, together embodying a complete synthesis of religious and ethical factors, which the prophetic movement as a whole has contributed to the understanding of the problem of existence.

(i) The prophets discovered the value of the individual through mystical experience. This discovery is at once theological and ethical. (ii) The prophets discerned God at the center of the historic movement. Thereby history finds a theological and ethical meaning, and the mystery of suffering is explained. (iii) The prophets grasp the truth of religious universalism—the ultimate principle of the final world religion, and find the principle of the universal ethic in the doctrine of service. (iv)

This universalism unites the theological doctrine of monotheism with the ethical doctrine of the solidarity of mankind. The unity of God does not make Him the philosophical Absolute but reveals Him as the Supreme Person. He does not absorb His universe nor does the race absorb the individual. Room is thus left for "pluralism," which recognizes the eternal value of separate individualities and so gives the basis for the doctrine of immortality. (v) The religio-ethical is found in the prophet's vision of the social destiny of mankind (named in modern times the "Messianic idea") which signifies the triumph of God's Leadership in history. The prophetic interpretation of this "Messianic" ideal differs from both the monarchical and priestly.

The prophetic quest for truth, for reality, for God, does not employ the mechanism of formal logic. It seeks to attain its object by means of "vision," or the direct inner beholding of reality. In the modern phrase its method is that of intuition or immediate insight. Instead of using the syllogism which creeps in the direction of truth by a zig-zag process its method is to employ the direct approach to truth. The resultant experience enables the prophet to declare "The word of the Lord came unto me, saying." This sounds very ancient and naïve, but it is given a modern standing among sophisticated philosophies by the work of Bergson and James. It is more than an accident that the modern philosopher of intuition should be a descendant of the ancient Hebrews. He has given a

complete philosophical warrant to the method employed by the ancient prophets in their grasping of ultimate reality by exalting the method of "intuition," the philosophical complement of the theological "inspiration," in showing its superiority to the Greek logic as the proper instrument of speculation. James has done an equal service in attaching a claim for the validity of religious experience as a source of the knowledge of reality. Nowhere can we get a clearer appreciation of the value of spiritual intuition than in the study of the permanent combined results of the prophets of Israel and the teachings of Jesus.

## I

By the aid of the mystical approach to reality the prophets discovered the value of the individual. Let us consider how this came about.

Primitive or tribal religion subordinated the value of the individual completely to the interests of the tribe. The individual existed for the tribe. Primitive Israelitish religion was distinguished from other primitive tribal religions by the conviction that the tribe also existed for the benefit of the individual. But the value of the individual is not ultimately appraised till revealed by the prophetic experience.

The prophet not only finds God but in so doing first truly finds himself. As he learns to know God he also learns that God already knows him as a separate personality, not merely as a fragment of the nation. His "prophetic call" is the discovery that

God needs him as the messenger of His Will to His people. The consequent dependence of God upon an individual as an agent of His working plan gives to the individual a supreme value. On making the discovery the prophet is at once humbled and transported. He knows his past limitations, but, in spite of them, he expands with the consciousness of potential greatness. God's need of him makes the prophet great.<sup>1</sup>

But the prophet's work cannot be carried out in isolation. His primary task is to reproduce his own type among the people who must be brought equally to the realization that prophetic responsibilities await them all—that is, that all are called to assume a share in establishing the divine community. God needs all men and so all men acquire an equal value with the original prophet. They are called upon to repent—not merely to regret the past, but radically to remodel their lives on the plan of God's Will for the realization of the righteous state. When the state is thus realized in righteousness it exists for God, but at the same time it also exists for the benefit of its lowliest and weakest member. The importance of the community is not relatively lessened because of the supreme value given to the individual. On the contrary the value of the community is raised to the highest point because in it alone can the individual find his task and thus come to complete self-realization. Salvation for the

<sup>1</sup> Witness the calls of Isaiah and Jeremiah, Isa. 6 and Jeremiah 1.

individual consists in forgetting to seek his private salvation but instead in seeking the salvation of the whole community.

## II

This now becomes the prophet's task. He must bring others to unite with him in seeking to organize the social life of mankind according to the Will of God. A righteous society or state cannot exist in isolation in the midst of a godless world any more than the righteous individual can be in safety in the midst of a wicked social order. The earlier tribal religion held that Jehovah's chosen people could exist in safety, though surrounded by strong nations who cared nothing for Jehovah's Will. The prophets came to see clearly that the nations who "knew not Jehovah" were both a corrupting influence and an external menace. God's plan for the Israelites could not work out except as it included the heathen peoples in its scope. In the eyes of the popular religion the destiny of the heathen was to be held in a state of complete subjugation by the "chosen people." But the prophets had a more religious and ethical solution. The great nations must also be won to allegiance to Jehovah and His Will for their own sakes as well as for the sake of Israel. Israel and all the other nations exist for that future community organized according to the Will of God and including all mankind.

In fact the prophets see Jehovah as already overruling the wills of the great nations. "According

to Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah, Jehovah not only has power over Israel and its armies, but the Assyrians and the Egyptians are at His disposal to carry out His plans."<sup>1</sup>

The priests fostered the idea that by means of the national cult with its offerings and sacrifices Jehovah would be led miraculously to protect His favorites from the invasion and conquest overtaking other smaller peoples. The prophets denounced this as vain and superstitious folly. In opposition to the priests they declared that the nation was not fulfilling the pleasure of Jehovah. It could not do so because it was not aware of His plan. It could only be awakened by some terrible lesson, and Jehovah was able to teach that lesson by the punitive power of the great conquering nations under His control. When at length Israel should have truly learned its lesson then it would become the world teacher. Universal peace and a league of all nations knowing Jehovah and fulfilling His Will would come as the culminating achievement. In this universal community of God the individual would find his complete well-being and enduring safety.<sup>2</sup>

But till the day should come when Israel would realize its God-given mission there must be such disciplinary suffering as would awaken the people to the consciousness of their high calling.

In no respect does the prophetic religion throw a clearer light upon the dark mystery of existence than

<sup>1</sup>Carl Marti, op. cit. p. 131.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Isa. 2, Micah 4.

in the profound insight into the divine mission of suffering.

Hosea learns from the anguish of his soul in dealing with an adulterous wife what God's attitude is toward His faithless people. He also learns from his insight into God's dealing with Israel how he should conduct himself towards his wife whom he loyally persists in loving despite her treachery to himself. Instead of inflicting upon her the penalty of the law, instead of hardening his heart to the point of hating her, he forgives, woos and wins her back to the ways of decency and honor, and becomes the redeemer of his wife, as Jehovah is the Redeemer of Israel. The adulterous wife and the adulterous nation must suffer, but their suffering is essential to their restoration and comes from a lover (human in one case, Divine in the other) who does not punish because of the bitter resentment of his soul, but because of his redeeming love overcoming the feeling of resentment.

But even more striking is the fact that the prophet's own attitude towards his people comes to be exactly the same as Jehovah's attitude. The prophet is a penitent. He has been a sinner, but he has sought God and received forgiveness and purification. He is not in an attitude of rebellion but of obedience. It does not occur to him to seek to save his own soul by separating himself from his people and so escape the calamities that have fallen upon them. He shares their fate while trying to save them from it. He suffers with them though he



deserves no punishment. Nay, in working for their good he incurs their ill will and hatred. Speaking the truth to them in love he is hewn in sunder by the sword which they turn against him in their anger. He dies for love of them—seeking not his own reward. The prophet's life, not merely his work, becomes a theodicy.

Amos believed that a righteous remnant would escape the calamities inflicted upon the nation. The experiences of the captivity taught men that in great calamities the righteous and wicked alike suffer the same external evils. During the captivity those born on foreign soil came to utter the thought that they were the innocent victims of their parents' sins. "The parents have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge." Against this complaint Ezekiel dogmatizes with the utterance of the principle that each soul is to be treated according to its personal merits—the father is not to suffer for the son or the son for the father. But this dogma overlooked the plain facts of observation and experience.

The true situation was that discovered by Ezekiel's successor, the anonymous prophet sometimes called "The Great Unknown," sometimes the Second Isaiah. He saw that the same external ordeal awaits the evil and the good—but that the reward of the righteous is internal and spiritual. The righteous accepts the suffering and profits by it. It becomes a bond of union between himself and Jehovah. He accepts it without complaint or

outcry—"as a sheep before his shearers is dumb." Hereby he enters into the inheritance of the blessed by becoming Jehovah's agent—acting as His "suffering servant." "He sees the travail of his soul and is satisfied." Nay more than satisfied—he knows the joy and triumph of God's victorious Son.

### III

Modern apologists see in pain a danger signal of warning. Pain is often the concomitant of the effort of nature to grow, expand, and to heal. Thus the object of pain is ultimately beneficent.

The discovery of the true means to eradicate social pains may lead to the discovery of the divine intention in respect to the adjustment of human relations. The rule of service is the program advocated by the prophet for the eradication of the social causes of suffering. The suffering prophet finds escape from his private woes by giving himself in service to the sinful and weak.

Humanity has a common destiny. The righteous can only survive (in the biological sense) by "making many righteous." The righteous individual must impart his qualities to his own people. The righteous people must then spread that divine quality till it reaches all mankind. The escape from suffering must be a social, solidaristic, universal escape, or what we might call social salvation. Hence the prophetic theology sets the foreign missionary his task of a campaign for world-wide salvation. The nations must be brought into the fold.

The suffering servant has been characterized by George Adam Smith in his work "The Book of Isaiah," as: "A human figure of lofty character and unfailing perseverance who makes God's work of redemption his own, puts his heart into it, and is upheld by God's hand. God, let us understand, has committed His Cause upon earth to human agents."<sup>1</sup> God, for His part, is supremely interested in human concerns. "He is One Who arises and comes down, Who makes virtue His Cause and righteousness His passion."<sup>2</sup>

The nation is also conceived as the suffering servant. Not ruling other nations with a rod of iron as a mark of the favoritism of an All-powerful God, we may find a humiliated, conquered nation, in the hour of its seeming failure aspiring to be used as an ally of God.

God Himself also suffers through His sympathies and in His arduous toil. His work is not lightly accomplished by the mere utterance of a fiat. It is still in the process of accomplishment and in it He also travails. "In the affliction of His people He is afflicted." How this contrasts with the priestly teaching that God is able to do all things independently of the co-operation of man, but that He waits to be persuaded by the use of correct ritual to give good gifts to His dependent children. This conception lacks the ethical quality and robs God of the

<sup>1</sup>Op. cit. vol. II, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* p. 140.

character of loyalty to the best interests of His creatures and robs man of the opportunity to enter into co-operative companionship with the Most High. The prophetic theology, in contrast, is moral, developmental and normal. God does not inflict punishment out of wanton cruelty or capricious anger but uses pain to develop men of the highest character, through whom His Own designs are accomplished. This is the interpretation to the understanding of the 53rd Chapter of Isaiah, especially in the concluding verses:

My righteous servant shall make many righteous,  
And himself will bear the burdens of their iniquities,  
Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,  
And with the strong shall he divide his spoil,  
Because he poured out his life-blood,  
And was numbered with the transgressors,  
And himself bore the sins of many,  
And interposed for transgressors.<sup>1</sup>

The prophet's attitude towards sin is the same as that towards suffering. He does not reproach others for causing him these heavy burdens but by being a sharer in the community's sins he labors to remove the sources of the sins from the community. His consolation is that his sin-bearing and pain-bearing have a value in the sight of God for the benefit of mankind, that they set a lofty standard to his fellows and have a purging and sanctifying influence upon his own soul. His sin-bearing effects a change for the better in the character of the sinners who

<sup>1</sup> Isa. 53: 11, 12. (Kent's Version.)

come under the spell of his influence as well as in his own character.

#### IV

Underlying and inseparable from the development of ethical universalism with its doctrine of service is the growing consciousness of the unity of God—theological monotheism. As Marti says, "One might transcribe every page of the prophets of the eighth century. They contain a unanimous testimony to the sole, unlimited and irresistible power of Jehovah, and they are at the same time a proof that in its essence monotheism existed from the very first and the earliest prophets."<sup>1</sup>

It is important to remember the logical connection between monotheism and ethical universalism. The prophets could not separate their doctrine of the One God from the doctrine of the solidarity of mankind. The priestly writers were inconsistent when they took over the prophetic doctrine of monotheism while rejecting the prophetic ethical universalism. They held to the ridiculous and presumptuous views that the One Omnipotent God remained interested alone in the Jewish race. This narrow conception is satirized by a Jewish writer of the Hellenistic period in the Book of Jonah. The narrowness of that fictitious false prophet receives the scorn of this liberalized author of a parabolic writing. Jonah is made ridiculous by his attempts to escape from the territory of Jehovah, by his

<sup>1</sup>Op. cit. p. 132.

chagrin at God's mercy to the Ninevites after their repentance, and by his caring more about the fate of a gourd vine than for the fate of a great city. The work seems almost to strike a note of levity at the expense of the tribal idea of God, but the Book receives a great weight of seriousness from the approving use made of it by our Lord. We must remember that humor was one of the prophetic weapons which Jesus Himself did not hesitate to employ even in dealing with the most serious matters.<sup>1</sup>

## V

Because of his knowledge of God's power and love the prophet knows how the future will ultimately unfold. He can foresee but one ending to the drama of life—a happy one. The tragic estrangement between God and humanity will yet be done away and there will be an eternal reconciliation. However long the tragic episode may be drawn out by human perversity the end will be in the phrase of Dante, a *Divina Commedia*.

There is to be a universal human brotherhood, founded upon mutual love and service and upon the immediate knowledge of God and guidance by Him. Through what agency is this golden age, this reign of God on earth to be accomplished?

In the times of Israel's oppression a deliverer was anxiously looked for. Who and what should the leader be? All answers agreed "an anointed one"

<sup>1</sup> See St. Luke 10:41, Moffat's Version.

—in the Hebrew “a Messiah,” that is, one especially consecrated to the office or task. There were three kinds of Messiahs or “anointed ones”—kings, priests and prophets. It is a strange fact that Christian theology has almost exclusively identified the word “Messiah” with kingship. The popular imperialistic idea of the Jews was doubtless at one time that the Messiah should be a conquering king who would deliver Israel from its enemies, extend the kingdom into an empire, and establish the inner well-being of the people. Isaiah and Jeremiah looked forward at times to a righteous king who would carry out their program of social justice. But apart from a few passages in the writings of these two prophets and in allusions by Haggai and Zechariah to contemporary Davidic princes, the monarchical idea of Messiahship is not common in the Old Testament. It finds a most interesting illustration in those passages of the prophecy of the Great Unknown wherein he hails Cyrus the Persian as Jehovah’s Messiah. This is because in his universalism the prophet believed that the emperor was an agent of Jehovah in rehabilitating the Jewish people.✓

Comparatively little attention has been paid by Christian theologians to the expectation that the future happy state of the Jews is to rest in the hands of the Jewish priesthood. This idea underlay the theocratic dream of the restored Israel in Ezekiel. It was part and parcel of the aspiration of the post-exilic priesthood and has left traces in the book of

Daniel. In Daniel the government is to be in the hands of the "saints," as he designates the priesthood, but the Deliverer is no less than Jehovah Himself, Who is expected to intervene by a catastrophic miracle in which the heathen are to be utterly crushed into submission.

We read of the anointing of the prophet Elisha by Elijah. But as a rule "anointing," as applied to the prophets, was used figuratively of the divine spiritual unction as in Isa. 61: 1.

In our study of the Deutero-Isaiah we have found the conception that the coming deliverer is not a king but a suffering prophet. The prophet is to accomplish the stupendous task through moral leadership and religious instruction.

This type of Messianic idea is the most ethical, the most rational and exalted. In place of the leadership of a political king or priestly theocracy it puts that of the God-knower, as that which is to bring in the consummation of the world drama.

This is the prophetic interpretation of the Messianic idea and it was in this sense, as we shall see, that Jesus must have conceived of His Own Messiahship. It is the highest religious and moral conception possible. The goal of humanity is not to be reached through conquest (as in the kingly Messianic idea), nor by a stupendous miracle (as in the priestly Messianic idea), but through divinely guided moral leadership, following a program of suffering service, establishing the universal community—the reign of God (prophetic, Messianic, Universalism). In



this community exploitation whether by kings or priests is necessarily self-excluded.

We have now seen how the prophets discovered: (1) the value of the individual; (2) the meaning of history as related to a divine plan; (3) the universal scope of that plan to include all mankind; (4) the fact that the human race is one as God is one; and (5) the means of moral leadership whereby the prophets believe that the triumph of God's reign on earth is to be secured.

We have next the painful task of turning from this glorious vision to the actual historical development as it was largely moulded by the enemies of the prophets, the priestly aristocrats and exploiters of religion.

## CHAPTER IV

THE PRIESTHOOD ESTABLISHES A MONOPOLY AND  
DEVELOPS A LEGALISTIC ETHIC PRIESTLY  
THEOLOGY

ONE of the greatest contributions of the "Higher Criticism" to the cause of the prophetic religion has been the uncovering of the story of priestly aggrandisement through intrigue and of the literary devices by which the priests covered their tracks so skilfully as to deceive subsequent generations for two millenniums and a half. We will now briefly recapitulate the results of these critical and historical investigations.

## I

After the settlement of the Israelites in Palestine priestly colleges began to grow up on the site of various Amorite shrines which were converted into Israelite holy places by being associated with incidents in the lives of the patriarchs.

The judicial functions of the priests, as we have already seen, had put into their hands a powerful weapon of exploitation which enabled them to conspire with the kings and nobles to "grind the face of the poor."

Owing to their proximity to the kingly court certain of the shrines soon won greater prestige, influence and wealth—Bethel in the Northern kingdom

and Jerusalem in the Southern. In place of the harmony that had previously existed rivalry, competition and jealousy began to develop between the different holy places.

## II

A new stage began after the fall of the northern kingdom which had greatly weakened the prestige of the local cults, though Bethel continued sufficiently important to hold the envious regard of Jerusalem. Not content with its position of superiority over the other local shrines the ambitious Jerusalem priesthood desired a complete monopoly of the priestly prerogatives. Their opportunity came and their plans were matured in the reign of Josiah—a weak and superstitious king—who was readily made the mere tool of the priestly faction. They now planned to use the secular arm of the monarch to kill off or to subordinate their priestly rivals as in the past they had dealt with the prophets.

The first step in the conspiracy is to forge a new version of the customary law and rewrite the history of Israel to make it appear that Jehovah Himself expressly desired that His cultus should be concentrated at Jerusalem and there hold a complete monopoly. Provision was made in this law for the destruction of the non-Jerusalemic temples and for the bringing of their priests to the capital in a menial position.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Deut. 7: 5.

In this code recognition is given to the monarchy and also to the office of the prophet, but the monarch is instructed to follow obediently the law (made by the priests in their own interest) and the prophet is restricted to exercising the mere function of prediction. He is forbidden to teach anything contrary to what the priests have written in this law and by implication is not to concern himself with present-day issues. His position is rendered very precarious by the provision that in the event of the failure of any of his predictions he is to be put to death as a false and presumptuous prophet.<sup>1</sup> Traces of the prophetic influence are supposed to be found in the presence of the provisions for the protection of the poor which are retained from the earlier mishpat and are even extended. But the value of the humane provisions was subsequently nullified by the simple fact that they were not enforced. On the side of religion the rights of the laity were restricted by withdrawing from them the privilege of sacrificing, which had been recognized in the Code of the Covenant.

The success of the forgery was immediate. Its influence was more enduring than even that of the later clerical forgery known as the pseudo-Isidorian Decretals. The account of the reforms of Josiah in the Second Book of Kings, chapter 22, f, reveals the extent to which foreign elements had been admitted to the temple of Jehovah. These recognized abuses might serve as a seeming justification

<sup>1</sup> Deut. 13: 1; 18: 20-22.

for the severe measures employed. But the real object aimed at by the priests in Jerusalem comes out in the treatment accorded the temples and shrines outside Jerusalem, which had hitherto shared the priestly vested rights that the Jerusalem priesthood now desired completely to monopolize. It was against the temple of Jehovah at Bethel, which had early received the bitter denunciations of the prophet Amos, and the other hillside altars in Samaria that the most drastic measures were taken. Not only were the altars destroyed but their officiating priests were massacred. Also all wizards and clairvoyants, all, in fact, who were in any sense rivals to the oracle of the temple in Jerusalem were suppressed.

The priests who had officiated at the hillside altars in the kingdom of Judah were not massacred but their treatment was severe. After their shrines had been desecrated they were brought to the temple at Jerusalem and degraded to the position of temple servants, whose office was to perform the more menial tasks connected with the worship. This movement received the approval of the prophet Ezekiel who regarded it as a just punishment for their practices.<sup>1</sup>

What was the net result? Certain of the more flagrant heathen rites were abolished. The country priests were taken away from the people. This may have been a blessing to the peasants though it left them without any religious leadership in

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. 44: 10.

place of an evil one. As we have seen, the provisions for the amelioration of the lot of the poor remained unenforced.

On the whole, it was a sweeping victory of the priests over the prophets. The latter are subordinated to the control of the priestly document. The principle of priestly authority, which the prophets had always held to be a usurpation contrary to the mishpat of Jehovah, received recognition. The underlying principle of the Amorite cultus that religion was essentially a matter of sacrifice, and that the favor of Jehovah was to be retained by a particular form of worship, now triumphs over the prophetic principle that the protection of Jehovah can only be expected by a state where justice and love of mercy prevail. Most important of all the principle of legalism in place of the principle of direct spiritual guidance through enlightened leadership was firmly established. "The interposition of a law as an absolute authority between God and the human soul is opposed to the very core and center of prophetic teaching."<sup>1</sup>

### III

The prophets of Jerusalem seem to have been parties to this priestly *coup d'état*. But it is not always borne in mind that the prophets in question belong to the supporters of the established order. They were the "prophesiers of smooth things" or "false prophets." After the reform they went

<sup>1</sup> Marti, op. cit. p. 289.

about declaring that now that the temple worship had been purified and the hillside altars destroyed according to the Will of Jehovah, His people could rest assured in the confidence that His Omnipotent protection would deliver them from the conquering powers of Egypt and Babylon. This false confidence was denounced by Jeremiah (so far as we know, the only surviving adherent of the ancient insurgent school of prophecy) as a superstition founded upon "lying words."<sup>1</sup> When the people were flocking to the temple seeking for protection, after Josiah had been slain by Pharaoh Necho, the prophet declared that the temple in which they were mistakenly putting their trust was no better than a den of thieves in the eyes of Jehovah. It could expect only the destruction that had previously been meted out to the temple in Shiloh.

In Jeremiah, chapter 28, we learn how bitterly he opposed the false prophets. In his encounter with Hananiah, one of their leaders, he declares that the people will go into exile and that the prophet himself will be overtaken by death within two years, which prediction was fulfilled.

#### IV

During the exile not only, on the one side, did the prophetic theology reach its acme of development in the humanitarian mysticism and universalism of the Great Unknown, but, on the other, the legalistic type of religion was being elaborated

<sup>1</sup> Jer. 7: 4.

by its adherents. They spent their time of waiting in elaborating a code of laws which would greatly enhance the priestly control. The result is found in what is known as the Priestly Code. This code was later to be published under the sanction of the name of Moses who was claimed as its author.

During the exile the prophet Ezekiel undertook to synthesize the priestly and prophetic elements of religion. "Born in Jerusalem of priestly family, he grew up under the shadow of the temple and under the teaching of Jeremiah. Both of these powerful influences may be traced throughout all his work."<sup>1</sup> He also tries his hand at code making but the authority which he claims for it is that of his own prophetic vision. It won no popular support in comparison with the code which claimed the authority of Moses. He embodies the ceremonial conception of holiness and looks forward to the restoration of the temple and of the priesthood to a power greater than that of the prince. The priestly monopoly, prestige, and opportunities for exploitation are increased.

Ezekiel embodies a seeming appreciation for the prophetic social ideas of religion, but the prominence which he gives to the ceremonial ideas nullifies the former. He was utterly unconscious of the radical opposition between the two religious viewpoints. Therefore, his influence, like that of the book of Deuteronomy, contributed to the

<sup>1</sup> Kent, "Student's Old Testament," vol. VI, p. 24.



ultimate triumph of the legalistic and ceremonial religion over that of the prophets.

## V

As a result of the Babylonian captivity the Davidic monarchy was deposed. In the place of it the Jewish theocracy had the control of the local administration of government. Those who returned from the captivity, at least some of them, for a time cherished the hope of again establishing an independent national existence under Zerubabel, a prince of the house of David, as king. This hope was voiced by the "regular" prophets Haggai and Zechariah who hailed him as "Messiah." These local references were later embodied in the traditional "Messianic prophecy" and were later supposed by some to be predictions relating to our Lord. These prophets, the mouthpieces of the priesthood, had been proclaiming that the protection of Jehovah could not be counted upon till the work of the restoration of the temple had been seriously undertaken. The following passage taken from an insurgent prophet is supposed to protest against this view:

Thus saith Jehovah, Heaven is my home,  
And the earth is my footstool;  
What manner of house is this that ye would build for  
me?  
And what manner of place is my habitation?  
All these my hand hath made,  
And all these are mine, is Jehovah's oracle.

But for these do I have regard, for the afflicted,  
And him who is broken in spirit, and who trembles at my  
word.

He then adds a bitter description of the practices of the cult in which he ranks the ritualistic acts of purification as no better than acts of ceremonial defilement.

He who slaughters an ox is also a man-slayer.  
He who sacrifices a sheep also strangles a dog;  
He who brings up an offering also sheds swine's blood.  
He who offers incense as a memorial also blesses an idol.  
As these have chosen their ways,  
And taken pleasure in their abominations;  
So will I choose wanton outrages for them,  
And will bring on them what they dread;  
Because when I called none answered,  
When I spoke they did not heed.  
But they did what was evil in my sight,  
And chose that in which I had no delight.<sup>1</sup>

The prophet Zechariah for his part retorts with a denunciation of such insurgent prophets. Their complete extermination is foretold. If any one should presume to prophesy, even his parents would brand him as one who lies in the Name of Jehovah, and with a sword in their hand would thrust him through. The prophets who survived will repent and renounce their prophetic claims, admitting that they are in reality but farmers and herdmen (mere laymen).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Isa. 66, Kent's version.

<sup>2</sup> Zech. 13: 3-5, Kent's version.

## VI

The return of the first company of the survivors of the exile in the reign of the Persian Artaxerxes, under the layman Nehemiah, inaugurated the era which was to witness the final stage in priestly exploitation. This was founded upon the work of Ezra and the other scribes who came with them in the second company of returned exiles bringing the third codification of the Jewish law which had been produced by them during the exile. This code, like Deuteronomy, was also predated back to Moses, and the history of Israel was re-written as an historic romance in which the priesthood are the heroes.

When we turn from reading the prophets to consider the Priestly Code we are conscious of a complete change of atmosphere. In place of the pure air of the mountain height we breathe the dead air of a confined dwelling. In place of the prophetic concern with world history, with righteousness, justice, brotherhood, we see priests whose idea of serving God is by means of inspecting the entrails of slain victims, and by the ritualistically correct handling of kidneys and other internal organs of bulls and goats.

Holiness is no longer associated with the heroic God-conscious type of life, with suffering service, but with acts of ritualistic purification. In place of the great missionary Messianic ideal, the national aspiration seeks merely the continuation of prosperity, protection from enemies and wild beasts,

a growth in numbers, and the perpetuity of the worship of the temple. In place of the vision of the nations flocking to Jehovah to learn His Will, there is the conception of the Israelite nation increasing through the addition of proselytes.

In place of the prophetic interpretation of history with its developmental idea, we find its opposite. Even while introducing radical innovations into the law they are represented as having had a full fledged existence even in the days of Moses. Whereas Ezekiel had proposed introducing changes in his idea of the restored temple at Jerusalem, the priestly method is to represent that its own idea had already been historically embodied in the so-called "Tabernacle." Ezekiel, as we have seen, recognized the fact that the introduction of the priests who had officiated at the hillside shrine into the temple at Jerusalem in a menial capacity was an innovation. The priestly writers, on the contrary, represent the institution of the Levites as having existed from the time of Moses.

It was easy enough to impose upon the ignorance of the common people. The priests had only the knowledge and insight of the prophets to fear. While they feared and hated the living prophet they could afford to do honor to those who had delivered their message and died. Considering the methods of suppression employed by the priests it at first seems a problem how any of the prophetic writings have been allowed to survive. The explanation is not difficult. The prophets had

foretold the exile. The priests had said that the temple was a talisman against that catastrophe. History had proved that the prophets had told the truth. This created a wholesome respect for the prophetic message. It explains why the social laws for the protection of the poor which the prophets had advocated were embodied and even extended in the Priestly Code. It was to provide a means of avoiding a repetition of the calamity. The changed attitude toward the prophets is expressed by the Chronicler who writes at this period. He condemns those who had not listened to the prophetic warning. "But they mocked the messengers of God and despised his words and misused his prophets until the wrath of Jehovah arose against His people, till there was no remedy. So He brought the king of the Chaldees upon them. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

This posthumous honor is of the letter not of the spirit. There is a note of self-congratulation implying that "If we had lived in the days of the fathers we had not been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets." But from the ethical and theological points of view they remained the sons of those who had slain the prophets. The priesthood goes on increasing its own influence by the theology which it now produces, creating a God in its own image. He is a capricious God, easily provoked to take awful vengeance and has constantly to be placated by sacrifice. He must be cajoled by priestly intervention just as He had

<sup>1</sup>II Chronicles, 36: 14 f.

been by Moses in days gone by.<sup>1</sup> He is an Oriental despot Who can only deal with the common people through official go-betweens. If any one else should presume to approach Him or burn incense to Him, He would consume them in His wrath. Righteous conduct seems to concern Him less than the correct ceremonial deference paid to His Person. The marks of holiness are external rather than spiritual. "Whoever belongs to the community and wishes to take part in the religious festivals, either slave or stranger, must be circumcised; whoever fails to comply with this requirement commits a mortal sin. Just as the priest's code throws back the Sabbath to creation, so it refers the institution of circumcision to the age of Abraham."<sup>2</sup>

"The importance which was attached to these external marks of membership in the congregation of Jehovah, and of distinction from other peoples, was a consequence of the position assigned by the legal religion to the Israelites among other nations in their relation to Jehovah. . . . Jehovah and Israel remained indissolubly united. Even though Jehovah was no longer what the peasant religion wanted Him to be, even though He has ceased to be exclusively the Lord of Israel, and has become the Lord of the whole world, yet He has chosen Israel as His peculiar people and restricted salvation to the Jews. . . . Whoever wishes to share in the offer of salvation must become a proselyte, a member of the Jewish congregation. In reality.

<sup>1</sup> Deut. 9: 14.      <sup>2</sup> Marti, op. cit. p. 211.

the Gentiles only existed for two objects: first, that the Lord of the whole earth may show His power upon them as He did upon the Egyptians, and on the other hand, that they may fill the temple with their riches and perform menial services for the Jews in their cattle raising and tillage."<sup>1</sup>

"A further consequence of the legal religion was that God was removed much further from His people, this in spite of the tenacity with which it clung to the belief that Israel was God's favorite people, and that Israel and Jehovah belonged to each other forever. For the law, as we have seen, is interposed between them and Jehovah, the God of the whole world, becomes an altogether transcendent Deity. The close personal relation between God and the prophet, not to speak of the intimate and familiar conversation with God on the old 'high places' are things of the past. Such an awe attaches to the divine Name Jehovah that it is unutterable. God's revelation in the law is final, and in the cultus a carefully graded hierarchy intervenes between the layman and God."<sup>2</sup>

The most important and radical antagonism between the prophets and the priestly legalistic religion remains the ethico-theological. Though the priests have accepted prophetic monotheism they have discarded its essential corollary of universalism, in place of which we have the narrowest priestly particularism fostering the pride and arrogance of

<sup>1</sup> Marti, op. cit. p. 211 f. Cf. Haggai 2: 7, Isa. 60: 5 f, 61: 5-7.

<sup>2</sup> Marti, op. cit. p. 219-220.

caste and race. Opposed to the idea of the direct personal guidance of the individual and the community we have an insistence upon the intermeddling of an official class. In place of an immanent, personal divine Friend and Father the priests present an unapproachable, transcendent God. In place of the idea of progressive revelation and guidance, revelation becomes a matter of a closed book. The moral degradation to which this system led reached its lowest level when the high priestly office came to be sold to the highest bidder as we read in the Second Book of Maccabees, chapter 4.

What is believed to be a prophetic fragment of unknown authorship belonging to this period of corruption which came under the rule of the Antiochian dynasty, is preserved in the following passage:

But the teraphim speak vanity  
And the diviners see lies  
And idle dreams they relate  
And in vain they offer comfort;  
Therefore the people wander like sheep  
They suffer because there is no shepherd.  
My wrath is hot upon the shepherds  
And upon the he-goats will I bring punishments.<sup>1</sup>  
Thus saith Jehovah to me,  
Shepherd the flock of the slaughter whose possessors  
slaughter them and hold themselves not guilty:  
And they who sell them say, Blessed be Jehovah, for I  
am rich!  
And their shepherds have no compassion upon them.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Zech. 10: 2, 3, Kent's version.

<sup>2</sup> Zech. 11: 4-6, Kent's version.



Thus did the prophets continue to bear witness against the priestly exploiters but were powerless to prevent their evil practices.

We shall now examine the grounds in fact which justified such prophetic denunciations as the foregoing.

## VII

Having secured the necessary theological and legal background in the Priestly Code—the priests were soon able to exploit their powers to their own economic advantage. “While the priests had to acknowledge the derivation of their privileges from the Law, what they derived was something very substantial. They drew unto themselves a steady proportion of the riches of the people. It was not only a privileged position which the law gave them; it was material wealth.”<sup>1</sup> Miraculous powers had been ascribed in the priestly narrative to Aaron’s rod—and the belief in the magical powers of the priests was heightened by the stories of the plagues of Egypt—the passage of the Red Sea, etc. It was not on the power of legal enforcement but upon the cultivation of superstitious fear that the priests relied to secure their exactions—and with apparent success.

The Temple from the time of the Exile to that of Christ became not only the great religious monopoly of the Jews but also their great financial Trust.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Edwyn Bevan—“Jerusalem Under the High Priests”—London, 1912, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> On this subject see “Jerusalem,” vol. I, Ch. VII, pp. 351–

The priests were the largest non-productive class—and together with the Levites and other Temple servants numbered many thousands. The Temple and the individual priests must have held large landed estates.<sup>2</sup> Because of their large revenues the priests had all the advantages—and they held a monopoly of various forms of trade.

It requires twenty pages of Prof. Schürer's "History of the Jewish People in the Time of Christ" (English Translation, div. II, vol. I, pp. 234-254) to enumerate and briefly describe the priestly emoluments in the time of Jesus. Of this we give the briefest summary:

Of the sacrificial victims the priests received the whole of the (1) sin offerings, and (2) the trespass offerings. They got the largest share of the (3) meat offerings. All of these sacrifices were of frequent occurrence. The (4) "shewbread" also fell to their lot. All of these could be consumed only by the priests.

Of the (5) thank offerings the priests received the breast and right shoulder, of the (6) burnt offerings they received the hides, from the sale of which Philo estimates they received a large income. The hides or fleeces of all offerings fell to the priests.

Though the sum derived from these sources was large it was far less than that from the dues levied upon the fruits of the soil and the offspring of

366, George Adam Smith and Schürer's "History of the Jews in the Time of Jesus Christ"—div. II, vol. I, pp. 234-254.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, *op. cit.* p. 360.

cattle which included, (1) the first fruits of wheat, barley, grapes, fig trees, pomegranates, olives and honey—thus the priests received the earliest crops of the year. Those near Jerusalem brought fresh fruits—those further away brought them dried. (2) Next came the *terumah*—distinct from the first fruits—which meant the best and choicest of the fruits and vegetables. This amounted to from one-sixtieth to one-fortieth of the entire crops. (3) Of the rest of the crops a “tithe,” i.e. one-tenth, was paid to the Levites, who gave one-tenth of their share to the priests. (4) Of the kneaded dough each family must give one-twenty-fourth to the priests (public bakers gave one-forty-eighth)—whether the flours used were wheat, rye, barley, spelt or oats. In addition (a) the firstborn of all the cattle, when male, belonged to the priests. If clean (i.e., suitable for sacrifice or food) they were given in kind. When (b) unclean (i.e., ass, horse, and camel) they were to be redeemed by payment of value plus one-fifth. (c) A tax of five shekels had to be paid by rich and poor alike for every first-born son.

In addition to the sacrifices the priests received the shoulder, two cheeks and stomach of *all animals slain for food*. They also had a share of the proceeds of sheep shearing. Besides these, the votive offerings—the bans, indemnities, and voluntary gifts and offerings enriched the unproductive priesthood. The Temple also levied a tax of one-half shekel on all males over twenty-one years.

The priests owned slaves. Whether they were purchased directly or no is not told—but probably the majority in any case came into slavery as the result of debts which they could not pay their priestly creditors.

In summing the matter up George Adam Smith says: "From all this we see not only how large in these later times the revenues of the priesthood and temple had become, but what a busy center the latter was both of trade and finance. Among the chief priests there were many with large fortunes. The High Priest and his counsellors were trustees and accountants on a large scale—the more so that there was, except for a part of the period, no separate civil authority. But they were also great traders. To assist them in the reception, investment and distribution of funds, they had a great staff of officials, duly organized and entitled. But, indeed, in those days nearly every priest must have been a trader."<sup>1</sup>

Thus the priest was not only a spiritual middleman—but he was the economic middleman of trade—who handled what others had produced and exploited the needs of both producer and consumer.

If Jeremiah had been justified in calling the Temple in his day "a den of robbers"—how vastly more fitting was the same characterization of it by Jesus in His day—when He aimed at its complete over-

<sup>1</sup> George Adam Smith, *op. cit.* p. 366.

throw. The Temple at Jerusalem was as truly a Temple of Mammon as the Bank of England or the New York Stock Exchange. But unlike the latter it pretended to be the Temple of God.

## CHAPTER V

## THE APOCALYPSES UNMASKED

WHEN Antiochus Epiphanes came to the throne of Syria of which Judea was then a part, the Jewish religion had seemingly but little hold left on the popular mind. Especially among the educated classes there had been a turning away from things Jewish to things Grecian. This tendency was encouraged in every way by the king, who was an ardent champion of the Greek *Kultur*. At length he thought the time had come when the last remnant of expiring Judaism could be extirpated by the use of force. He issued a royal decree abolishing sacrifices to Jehovah and attaching the death penalty to the observance of the Jewish ceremonial law. He caused the temple of Jehovah to be dedicated to Zeus, the chief god of the Greek Pantheon. The Hebrew sacred books were confiscated.

This period of oppression led to a violent reaction. The indifferent were called back to a renewed loyalty to the faith of their fathers. Many Jews met the martyr's death for refusing to sacrifice to the pagan god, or to commit ceremonial acts forbidden by the Torah. The reaction led, further, to the successful Maccabean uprising on the political side. A new type of religious writing called the Apocalyptic was called into existence by this crisis, of which the book of Daniel was the first product.

Without disparaging the true patriotism of the Maccabean priests we may say that both the political and literary movement had the same object, the retrieving of their fortunes by the priests through rallying the people to the support of the national religion and institutions.

The Apocalyptic movement was a desperate device born of a desperate emergency. The hand of the priestly intriguer is to be discerned. As the Deuteronomic and Priestly Codes had been predated and vested with the authority of Moses, so by the same familiar priestly device the Apocalypses were predated and furnished with the authority of a recognized prophet whose name was forged to the document. As the priestly writers had invented fictitious characters and presented them as actors in historic events so the author of the Apocalypse of Daniel invented Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego in the fiery furnace and Daniel's den of lions, to illustrate their contention that all who remained loyal to Judaism under persecution might hope for miraculous deliverance. But if this should fail they added still another promise that all who should die for the faith would find a happy resurrection from the dead in the approaching epoch of the Jewish world empire.

In this writing history appears in the form of prophecy. The prophecy is alleged to have come in the form of visions, the ultimate object of which is to show that upon the ruins of the world empires of Babylon, Medea, Persia and Macedon

the new world empire is to be miraculously erected by God.

## I

The theology of the Apocalypses is distinctly of the priestly variety and opposed to the prophetic. The Apocalyptic idea of God is transcendent. He no longer communes with men directly but uses angels as His mediators. Accordingly He is not conceived as working through world history, as the prophets held. Instead He lets it take its evil course till He is ready to smash it and erect a new world order on the ruins of the old. Thus the prophetic developmental idea is lost.

The prophetic universalism is also lost. Not the conversion but the destruction of the heathen is anticipated. Instead of the prophetic anticipation of a world federation there is to be a world hegemony of the Jews in which they will exact tribute of the heathen and rule them with a rod of iron.

The prophetic ethic gives place to the ceremonial. The heroes of Daniel are not champions of the poor, not suffering servants, but those who pray toward Jerusalem, refuse to eat things ceremonially unclean, and to bow down to idols.

In consequence of their loyalty Daniel and his associates do not have to wait till after death for their rewards, but rise to positions of wealth and splendor in the court of Babylon. Wonderful opportunities to exploit his power of interpreting dreams are made good use of by Daniel.



The Apocalypses employed the obscure allegorical form in order that their real meaning might be hidden from the authorities while the faithful would be able to discern the signs which were promised as immediately preceding the expected deliverance. Such a sign is found in Daniel 2: 43: "And whereas you saw the iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves by marriage alliances, but they shall not cling to one another, even as iron does not mingle with clay." This was a covert allusion to two unfortunate intermarriages between the reigning houses of Syria and Egypt. The words that follow are intended to convey to the enlightened reader that the promised deliverance is not far off: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed nor shall the sovereignty be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and destroy all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever." The miraculous nature of the intervention is insisted upon as follows: "Inasmuch as you see that a stone was cut out of the mountain *but not with hands*, and that it break in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and the gold."<sup>1</sup>

## II

It would be extremely difficult to decide how far the Apocalypses represented a deliberate fraud on the part of the priests, and how far the authors of them were themselves deceived by their false hopes.

<sup>1</sup>Daniel 2: 44, 45.

Many passages incorporated into some of them, especially the book of Enoch, seem to have the ring of genuine sincerity. This book is quoted as genuine Scripture in our canonical book of Jude, and there are many passages in the Gospels that seem to be paraphrases of passages in Enoch.

For the most part the Apocalypses seem to have been the work of Pharisees. This sect seems to have been the successor of the sect of the Assideans of whom we hear as co-operating for a time with the Maccabean revolution. They seem to have been advocates of non-resistance, not as a moral principle, but on the ground that human effort would be valueless to accomplish an end which they held could be accomplished only by the strength of Omnipotence. To hasten this event they not only observed all the requirements of the Torah but insisted in addition on the observance of a great mass of oral tradition of later date. They laid emphasis upon the doctrines of the immortality of the soul, of the existence of good and evil spirits, and of predestination.

These doctrines, so strongly resembling the familiar teachings of the Persian religion, are held by Prof. Lawrence Mills to indicate that the name Pharisee was applied to them because their dependence upon Persian sources was recognized. But the important matter is not the source of their views but the views themselves. However, a certain parallelism between the Persian Apocalyptic

writings and the Pharisee Apocalypses is worth noting.

The survivals of the Persian Apocalypses in their present form are dated by critics between the third and sixth centuries of the Christian era, but are held by Prof. Mills to embody fragments of early Apocalypses antedating the appearance of the book of Daniel among the Jews. While it may be difficult to establish the fact of any literary dependence on one side or the other, it is to be noted that in each case the Apocalyptic literature arose among a people threatened with extinction, and, in their despair, looking for a supernatural deliverer. It is also interesting to note that the personal figure of the promised deliverer has far greater prominence in the Persian than in the Jewish Apocalypses. Prof. Lehmann (in Chantepie de la Saussaye's *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, vol. I, p. 199) has constructed a composite Apocalypse out of the Persian material, of which the following is a summary:<sup>1</sup>

In the period of the last three millenniums of the world history the power of evil is to become predominant. The oppression of the righteous by the powers of evil will call into existence prophets and heroes who will save the faithful and finally establish the supremacy of Ahura Mazda (the righteous God) forever. The coming of the final struggle will be heralded by signs in the sun and the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Prof. West's *Edition of the Pahlavi Texts in the Sacred Books of the East*.

moon, by earthquakes and tempests. Fear and terror will prevail among the sons of light. Hordes of the enemies of the Persians will fall upon their land and turn fertile plains into deserts. Many who seek to save their lives shall narrowly escape, while their wives, children and property will be destroyed. A horde of demons will appear from the East.

The hero Hashedar, the first son of Zoroaster, the hero of the first of the future thousand year epochs, is to be born. He will assemble the remnants of the faithful, and thrice shall he defeat the enemy, so that the prince of the demons with all his followers will be summoned against him. Then the righteous God will send His messenger, Sraosha, and the heavenly hosts to the rescue: They will awaken the son of Vistaspa and consecrate the sacred fire and water together. They will then reëstablish the kingdom of the faithful by destroying the remnants of the wicked and demolishing the heathen temples. The period of the wolf shall end; the period of the lamb shall begin.

Hushedar Mah, the second son of Zoroaster, is to be the hero of the following thousand years. He is to fight against serpents and demons, and bring about a period of peace and progress. The science of medicine is to make such progress that men are to discover the means of becoming invulnerable, and hunger will gradually diminish so that men may live without eating. But there is to be a lapse from faithfulness, and as a result Angra Mainyu (the Devil or Satan) so revives that

he is able to unloose the dragon Azi Dahaka, who has been bound for a thousand years, and this monster is directed by him to attack the true believers. A third of all living men are to be destroyed. The creation prays to Ahura Mazda for another hero. Thereupon God calls Keresaspa who slays the dragon. Discord and destruction begin to disappear, but the final triumph of good awaits the third and last millennium.

This millennium is to be heralded by the birth of a virgin born hero. The holy maid (Eretate Fehdra), while bathing in the sacred waters of the lake Kasava is to conceive from the seed of the prophet Zoroaster,—which shall have been preserved to that end by thousands of the spirits of the faithful. She is to bring forth a son called Saoshyant, which means Saviour. On the coming of this virgin-born hero the dead are to rise and body and spirit are to be reunited. All mountains and hills will melt and overflow the earth in a molten mass. This will utterly destroy the wicked but to the righteous it will be as warm milk. Then the final conflict between the powers of good and evil will result in the everlasting triumph of the former. Satan is to be bound by Ahura Mazda, and with all his angels the devil is to be cast down and destroyed in the molten mass. The angels of light and righteous men are then to enter into a state of everlasting perfection and joy.

The Persian Apocalypse differs from the Jewish in that it makes use of distinctly Persian thoughts

and ideas as its material. In spite of the differences there is much in the foregoing that bears a resemblance to passages in the Apocalypse of John. The references to earthquakes, famines, pestilences, signs in the sun and moon, wars, and calamities bear a resemblance to Apocalyptic passages in the Gospels. This seems to have been common material of Persian, Jewish and Christian Apocalypses. This additional factor they also have in common, that the deliverance of mankind instead of coming through moral effort, is to come wholly from above by the intervention of God Himself or Heaven-born heroes or Saviours assisted by angels and archangels. In all of this it differs radically both from the religion of the Hebrew prophets and that of the prophet Zoroaster.

### III

In the book of Daniel there is one problem which deserves special consideration because it bears directly upon our subsequent discussion of the Messiahship of Jesus. The crucial passage is as follows: "I saw in the night visions, and behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like to a Man (literally, Son of Man), and He came to the Aged One and was brought before Him, and there was given Him dominion and glory and sovereignty, that all the peoples, nations, and languages, should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his sovereignty one that shall not be destroyed."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Daniel 7:13, 14.

It is to be carefully noted that this "one like unto a Man" ~~personifies the Jewish people~~ to whom the world empire is about to be given. This figure stands as the symbol for this empire just as the lion, the bear, etc., symbolize the ancient world empires that are to be done away. Just as in modern times the lion is taken as the symbol of Great Britain, the bear of Russia, and the eagle of the United States. This figure is ~~not in any sense~~ that of a Messiah any more than the statue of Liberty is the sovereign of the United States. The point of view of the author of Daniel is not monarchical but theocratic. It is the priesthood at the head of the whole people which is to exercise world dominion, as the following verse shows: "And the sovereignty and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall surely be given to the people of the sons of the Most High. His sovereignty (that is, God's, or what to the author was the equivalent, Israel's) is an everlasting sovereignty and all dominion shall serve and obey him."

In this passage we have an expression of the national "will to exploit." It is not so much the will of the hierarchy to exploit the Jewish people but the will of the Jewish people to exploit the rest of the world. This priestly practice has been exalted into a principle and has become the watchword of the national program. There can be no doubt that some of the later Apocalyptic writers firmly believed that this career of exploitation was the mission which Jehovah intended His people to

fulfil. The author of 4 Ezra (or 2 Esdras) expresses this expectation and at the same time utters a note of peevish impatience at the delay in the final consummation. He writes:

But we (the Jewish people) thy first born, thy beloved  
[most dear]

If the world has indeed been created for our sakes why  
do we not enter into possession of our world?<sup>1</sup>

We are now in a position to judge of the theological and ethical implications of the Apocalyptic ethic and theology. It was the negative of the prophetic—the logical continuation and development of the priestly. These facts must be clearly kept in mind in any endeavor to find a solution for the “eschatological problem” of the Synoptic Gospels. That is to say, the question as to how far Jesus incorporated in His teachings the Apocalyptic interpretation of life considered in the past, present and future. This matter will now engage our attention.

<sup>1</sup>4 Ezra, 6: 58.



## CHAPTER VI

## THE THEOLOGY OF JESUS

THE modern endeavor to ascertain the real message of Jesus has proceeded in the main along the lines of literary criticism of the Gospels, together with a study of contemporary Judaism, and with the help of occasional "psychologizing" used in a rather amateurish way. A great deal of this work has proved of permanent value as an introduction, but much confusion remains to be cleared up. The best method of arriving at a clear solution must come through the study of the theological substructure of Jesus' thought which hitherto has been surprisingly neglected.

As the criticism of the Hexateuch produced a "documentary hypothesis," so has the study of the Synoptic problem. It is generally accepted that our Gospel of Mark is a primary source of the events in the life of Jesus which was employed as such by the Evangelists Matthew and Luke. The two latter also use a document containing the "Sayings" or fragments of discourses embodying teachings of Jesus. This document is sometimes called the "Logia" or, more briefly, "Q" (an abbreviation originally employed by the German critic signifying *Quelle* or source). The Apocalyptic discourse of Mark 13 and its parallels in the other Synoptics is by some held to be another original

source. Some again hold this discourse to be the embodiment of genuine teachings of Jesus, while others consider it to have been an Apocalyptic oracle, pseudepigraphical (as were all such little Apocalypses of which many were in circulation) to which the Name of Jesus had been forged, but which was employed by all three Synoptic writers under the impression that it was a genuine oracle of their Master. The first and third Evangelists are credited with having combined historical settings taken from Mark with such an arrangement or combination of the "Sayings," as best suited their purpose. Moreover, each of these writers had his own particular viewpoint, or "tendency," which influenced him in the adaptation which he made of his material. Prof. Burton of Chicago has a much more elaborate documentary hypothesis. He holds that there were at least four principal and several minor documents employed by the two later Evangelists.<sup>1</sup>

In the following discussion I accept the hypothesis that the three main sources were Mark, the Logia (Q), and the Apocalyptic "oracle of Jesus" which I hold to be pseudepigraphical.

It has been almost universally held that Jesus was not a theologian. He did not employ the jargon of the schools whether rabbinical, or metaphysical (Hellenistic). From this fact it has been falsely

<sup>1</sup> "Some Principles of Literary Criticism and Their Application to the Synoptic Problem," University of Chicago Press, 1904.

inferred that His religion was non-theological. For example, Hegel failed to do justice to Jesus' thought because he could not regard Him as a profound philosopher. (This was presumably because he could not find in His teachings any anticipation of the Hegelian logic.)

But since Bergson has rehabilitated the method of direct insight or spiritual intuition, perhaps a tardy recognition will be accorded, in philosophical circles, to the profundity of Jesus' metaphysical formulations. A like recognition is awaiting the philosophical value of the ethic of Jesus and its logical coherence. The theological teachings of our Lord naturally group themselves according to the scheme of the prophetic theology in the following order: (i) His teaching as to the value of the individual; (ii) His interpretation of history, or the developmental idea; (iii) His universalism; (iv) His teaching about God; (v) His teaching about the community or the Messianic idea. This last will be considered under the threefold aspects of (a) its prophetic quality; (b) the conception of the Kingdom; and (c) the means of its inauguration. This, in turn, will lead to a critical discussion of the eschatological problem to which a separate chapter will be devoted. This, in turn, will be followed by a chapter on Jesus as the Prophet-Messiah, with a special reference to the Messianic ethic.

The affinity of Jesus with the prophetic theology and His antagonism to the theology and ethic of the priestly cult will be frequently noted.

## I

The teaching of Jesus about the value of the individual is a striking extension of the prophetic idea and a contrast to that of His contemporaries, the scribes. The former discovered that God needs men, that He depends upon them, and that the reign of God on earth has the highest welfare of mankind as a leading object. The individual stands out from the tribal community. The scribes held that only certain men (and very few) had a value in the sight of God. The Gentiles had none. The Samaritans perhaps had less. Not even all Jews had value—only the few who belonged to the priestly caste, or who, like the Pharisees, strictly observed the law. The Galileans, as well as the publicans, the harlots and the uncircumcised were considered ceremonially, if not also morally, impure and loathsome in the sight of God.

The only type of men against whom Jesus turned the shafts of His indignant scorn were those who were scornful of others, namely, the scribes, the Pharisees, and the priests of the temple. Against these He contended for the supreme value of the individual man as man, and this thought was to find its embodiment in the ideal community.

The value of the individual begins in earliest childhood. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." The old must return to the simple, childlike attitude before they can enter the kingdom.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mk. 10: 14, 15, Mt. 18: 3; 19: 13, Lk. 18: 16.

To receive a child is to receive the Great Teacher Himself.<sup>1</sup> As for the individual who may injure a child it would have been better for him never to have been born.<sup>2</sup> To give a drink of water to a thirsty child is to merit an everlasting reward.<sup>3</sup> The children possess an original righteousness. Those who repent, in so doing, return to the childlike relationship with God.

Even those whom the spiritual aristocrats despise have an infinite value. The Samaritan may be a neighbor more truly than priest or Levite, if he loves his neighbor as himself. God feels that love directed toward one's neighbor is equivalent to love directed toward God Himself. The despised beggar filled with sores, regarded as a cause of ceremonial defilement, goes at his death to enjoy loving intimacy with Abraham, while the rich man who despised and treated him as an inferior is, perhaps on that very account, an outcast from the society of the blessed.

Jesus recognizes in the Gentile centurion such faith as He had not found in Israel. The widow of Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian received a greater mark of God's favor than the widows and lepers of Israel. The publicans and harlots go into the Kingdom of God before the scribes and Pharisees. There is rejoicing in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth. God protects the sparrows, clothes

<sup>1</sup> Mk. 9: 37, 41; Lk. 9: 48.

<sup>2</sup> Mt. 18: 6, 10; Mk. 9: 42.

<sup>3</sup> Mt. 10: 42.

the lilies, feeds the birds. But they are nothing in comparison with His loving care for men. So great is God's interest in His children that He numbers even the hairs of their heads. To succor the needy, the sick, the imprisoned, is to minister to the Judge of all the earth Himself.

The world's standard of value is reversed. Many that are last shall be first, and the first last, in the Kingdom of God.

The contemporaries of Jesus regarded Israel alone as "God's elect," "His Son," "His Beloved," "His Only-Begotten." They did not apply any of these titles to persons but only to the personified "Chosen People." Jesus, on the other hand, regarded individuals as the children of God.

The problem of the significance of Jesus' use of the phrase "Son of Man" finds its key in the discovery of the lofty regard with which He considered the individual man as man. In the theology of Jesus such high claims are made for man as the child and spokesman of God that many of the sayings which He applies to man in general are by his later adherents held to apply only to Himself as Messiah. This contrasts with the point of view both in the Old Testament and in the mouths of Jesus' contemporaries. The Greek *μὴδς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* is the translation of the Aramaic "Bar-nasha" which is the exact equivalent of the Hebrew "Ben-Adam." In the Old Testament the phrase is applied to mankind in general, as opposed to God, or to the Gentiles as opposed to the elect people, the

Jews. For example, we read in Numbers 23:19 "God is not a man that He should lie, neither the Son of Man that He should repent," and in Deuteronomy 32:18 (R. V.) the children of men are contrasted with the children of Israel.<sup>1</sup>

In the Psalms the phrase is commonly used to emphasize the contrast of mortal, impotent, transient man, as against an Omnipotent, Eternal God.<sup>2</sup> In two passages the phrase "Children of Men" is used as a synonym for mankind. In fact, its most usual sense is that of "mankind," "the human race," and is a title of humility or inferiority. In the mouth of Jesus the word is always a title of dignity.

But there is another sense, perhaps colloquial, in which the phrase occurs as a substitute for the personal pronoun, both for the first and second persons singular. In the latter sense the phrase "Son of Man" occurs eighty-nine times in the writings of Ezekiel always as the form of address applied to the prophet by Jehovah. "The term 'Ben-Adam,' " says Prof. Hirsch, "is merely a cumbersome and formal substitute for the personal pronoun; such substitution being due, perhaps, to the influence of Assyro-Babylonian usage." The usage in Aramaic is similar and is also found in Syriac, Mardiac, Talmudic, and other dialects.)

<sup>1</sup> See Article "Son of Man" by E. H. Hirsch, University of Chicago, Professor of Rabbinical Literature,—Jewish Encyclopedia, vol. II, p. 461.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. 8:4 (A. V. 5)—11:4—33:13.

The use of the phrase as applied to man and also as a substitute for the first personal pronoun constantly recurs in the sayings of Jesus. It is possible that He used it in a third sense also as symbolic of God's Kingdom. (Mt. 10: 23.)

The Jew in the time of Christ did not share Jesus' exalted view of humanity. He took the Old Testament point of view expressed in the book of Job—"The son of man which is a worm,"<sup>1</sup> and heeded the warning of the Psalmist, "Put not your trust in the son of man."<sup>2</sup> So novel and startling was Jesus' exalted view of the divine significance of simple man that His utterances about him fell upon the ears of the Pharisees as blasphemy. Yet many of these utterances are little more than a development of the thought found in the prophets. Compare the declaration of Jesus "Man is greater than the temple,"<sup>3</sup> with the prophetic utterance "I desire mercy and not sacrifice"<sup>4</sup> paraphrased by Jesus in the words "Mercy is greater than sacrifice."<sup>5</sup> The sentiment in each case is the same, that it is greater in God's sight to minister to mankind than to concern oneself with the acts of the temple cultus. The same idea is developed still further in the statement "Man is lord even of the Sabbath."<sup>6</sup> This claim was on a par with the state-

<sup>1</sup> Job 25: 6.    <sup>2</sup> Ps. 143.

<sup>3</sup> Mt. 12: 6 (R. V.) margin.

<sup>4</sup> Hosea 6: 6.

<sup>5</sup> Mt. 12: 17.

<sup>6</sup> Mt. 12: 8; Mk. 2: 28.



ment that under certain circumstances a man could forgive the sins of another.<sup>1</sup> Of course, all men have not only the right but also the duty to forgive others who have sinned against them. It is only by so doing that they can consistently ask for God's forgiveness, but beyond that any man who has consciously entered into the Kingdom, that is, come into co-operating relationship with the Father, may speak words of absolution to a penitent, who, like the paralytic, is bound and held in the chain of his sins. But these various statements made by our Lord to apply to the spiritually enlightened man in general were by His later interpreters restricted in their application to Jesus Himself as the Messiah. This tendency begins in the Gospels,<sup>2</sup> and reaches its climax in the opinion that the use of the phrase "Son of Man" by Jesus applied only to Himself in the Messianic sense.

Among modern interpreters of the thought of Jesus as to the value of the least and lowliest of the sons of men none has more clearly grasped or cogently stated the true doctrine of the worth of the individual than Prof. Howison in his essay on "The Right Relation of Reason to Religion."<sup>3</sup>

Howison appreciates this teaching both on its negative and constructive side, as destroying the method of authority (that of the scribal and Phari-

<sup>1</sup> Mk. 2: 5 f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Mt. 12: 8, Lk. 6: 5.

<sup>3</sup> "Limits of Evolution and Other Essays," p. 217 f, especially pp. 241-260.

saic ecclesiasticism, which "shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men") and, presenting the revolutionary proclamation of the relation between God and man as an eternal solidarity of God and man in the community life of the kingdom.

The earlier interpreters of Jesus grasped the fact that He claimed for Himself personally such a solidarity with God, but they restricted the application of the same claim which Jesus made for all mankind to Himself as the unique Son of God. Jesus' doctrine was that of the potential, nay, the essential solidarity of God and the human race. His interpreters limited the doctrine so that it should teach the exclusive solidarity of Jesus with God. Jesus' doctrine is thus set forth by Howison:

This novel, unprecedented and astounding doctrine of a universal, moral equality as the aim of all spiritual being, an equality which is to embrace all minds in a complete union with the Mind of God, and from which all external authority is to be excluded, Jesus, by the plainest implication sets forth as the object and goal of all spiritual effort.<sup>1</sup>

In this conception of the religious relations of souls to God and to each other, Christ has parted company with all the piety that had gone before Him, and to such a degree as had never in the older world been paralleled.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit. p. 250.

<sup>2</sup> Howison fails to do justice to the prophetic doctrine of the value of the individual. As we have seen Jesus' doctrine was but an enlargement of the prophetic. Howison is right in calling that doctrine revolutionary, but it was not new except in relation to the priestly view of His contemporaries.

His theistic step was not simply new, it was absolutely revolutionary. His point of view of the literal divine sonship of every lowliest and most sinful and sinning spirit, committed Him logically to the assertion of the implicit equality of all spirits with each other, so far as concerns their moral powers and destinations, no matter what their actual and contingent state; and also of their potential equality with God.<sup>1</sup>

Howison realizes that the monarchical view of God as a "sovereign" is replaced by the doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood.

To break away from this magisterial and monarchical conception of God which left men nothing but the submissive subjects of a Lord, Whose sovereign Will ordained all things, even the supreme distinction between what is right and what is wrong, was indeed a great and unprecedented step. But Jesus took it. Instead of Majesty and a Lord, He presents God as the Friend and moral Father of men, Who calls every human being, every spirit, to the equality of sharing in that fulness of spiritual powers which constitutes the Divine glory. . . .

The aim of such a religion is not merely to "glorify God"; rather it is to glorify all souls, as all in the image of God; to glorify them by fulfilling for every one of them its vocation to repeat in a new way the life of universal love that is the life of God, and thus to attain through the universal greatening, such a real glorification of God as other forms of religion seek after in vain. The God of Christ is indeed (Himself) One Who comes "not to be ministered unto but to minister," and Who illuminates in His Own Person the great and characteristic truth

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit. p. 251.

spoken by Jesus, "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life shall find it." <sup>1</sup>

According to the teachings of the prophets and of Jesus the Cause of God Himself is thwarted so long as the least and lowliest are kept from the opportunities of growth and expansion. The individual does not come unto his own till he discovers God's need of him as co-founder of the Messianic Kingdom.

This leads us to the consideration of the vital question as to how Jesus regarded the quest for personal salvation. This was the object which was diligently sought by the Pharisee through the method of legalism and ceremonialism. Not only does Jesus declare this method unavailing but proclaims that the quest for personal salvation in itself is unavailing and self-defeating. This quest is based on the assumption that God is unwilling and reluctant to impart the gift of salvation to individual men and that they must therefore find some means of persuading Him to grant it. According to Jesus' teaching God does not require any such persuasion. He is already seeking the lost. The lost should not be seeking themselves and their own salvation but should be seeking God and His righteousness, that is, the triumph of His righteous Cause, His reign in the universal community. Thus by forgetting the desire for personal salvation and seeking the universal salvation the

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit. p. 252, f.

individual finds himself in the blessed company of the saved. He who treats men as though they were mere instruments to minister to his own superior comfort and well-being is seeking his own welfare at the expense of other men or the community. He is sinning against the value of the individual and so of mankind. Because of the value of the individual in God's sight this exploiting of men is the supreme sin which cuts them off automatically from the Kingdom of God. Hence the difficulty of the rich,—for wealth is regarded as the outcome of exploitation,—in entering into the Kingdom of God. They can only do it by renouncing the fruits of their exploitation. They must lose the safety which their wealth guarantees them in order to find their salvation in the community where all are saved.

## II

The close affinity already recognized between the thought of Jesus and that of the prophets creates a presumption in favor of the view that He shared the prophetic valuation of history. In such of His sayings as have been preserved to us there are few direct allusions to this conception. The passage, perhaps, which comes nearest to revealing the prophetic conception of history is that wherein He refers to John the Baptist and the prophets of the past as having been already members of the Kingdom of God.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 128.

The essence of the prophetic philosophy of history lay in the developmental idea and this thought is clearly set forth in undoubted Q passages in the parables of the seed growing secretly, the mustard seed, and the leaven.

In spite of this the modern eschatologists teach that Jesus held the Apocalyptic catastrophic view of world history and the coming of the Kingdom of God. Be it noted, however, that the least convincing portions of the work of Johannes Weiss and Schweitzer are those in which they seek to eliminate the developmental idea from these parables.

Moreover, the doctrine of the immanence of God clearly implies His Presence in the world. The teaching that God feeds the birds, and numbers the hairs of the heads of His children, the teaching that the children are already members of the Kingdom, are based upon the idea of God as present in the world.

If His Presence be shown in these small matters, how much more must His guidance be manifested in the weightier matters of great historic movements. This view will be further confirmed and established if it be shown that the ethics of Jesus contemplated the bringing in of the future historic changes implied in the coming of the Kingdom by moral processes and not by a gigantic miracle. This matter will receive more extensive treatment in the next chapter.

## III

The prophetic universalism was an organic part of the prophetic interpretation of history. It linked up the development of the non-Jewish races with God's plan for the salvation of the Jews and that of the Jews with the ultimate salvation of mankind. It is not difficult to show that as opposed to the particularism of the priestly-apocalyptic theology Jesus made the prophetic universalism His Own. This still further strengthens the argument in favor of Jesus holding to the prophetic interpretation of history. Certain critics are found to deny that universalism was inherent in the teachings of Jesus. The eschatologists must naturally deny it as inconsistent with the Apocalyptic particularistic world view. The Apocalypses were, in Harnack's phrase, "more intent on the downfall than on the conversion of the heathen." Among the passages which these critics urge in support of their view are the words of Jesus to the Syro-Phœnician woman especially as reported in Matthew's version which contains the words "I am not sent save unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Another passage is that in the commission to the Twelve telling them not to go into any city of the Samaritans or Gentiles (again, according to Matthew's version). But the chief ground of their contention is the inference from the exclusive character of the Church in Jerusalem where the immediate followers of the Lord were in control, that this exclusiveness must have been based upon some teaching of His.

We find, however, that the passages which seem to restrict the Lord's mission to the Jews occur in St. Matthew's Gospel alone. And it is recognized that this is a distinctively Jewish Gospel whose author has the tendency to "rabbinize" the teachings of Jesus wherever the opportunity offers. This tendency seems to be lacking in the Q version. In this document we have the account of the healing of the centurion's servant. On entering into Capernaum a centurion in the Roman army asks the Teacher to heal his servant who is sick of the palsy. Jesus says forthwith "I will come and heal him." This eagerness to help is in striking contrast to the hesitation He is reported to have shown in regard to the Syro-Phoenician woman, which is placed on the ground that the children must be fed before the dogs and that He is sent only to the Jews. Moreover, the centurion's faith is selected for commendation as greater than any faith which the Master has found in Israel. This He would have been reluctant to admit if He had held to the narrow particularism ascribed to Him by the eschatologists.

The difference of treatment accorded the Syro-Phoenician woman must not therefore be referred to a question of principle but to the general circumstances. It is important to note that Mark states that Jesus wished no man to know of His Presence in the town. Doubtless His tired nerves demanded rest. Perhaps it was in quest of such a period of rest that He went into the borders of Tyre and



Sidon. Matthew tells us that the woman made a scene, so much so that she rasped the nerves of even the disciples. Does not this combination of circumstances,—Jesus' weariness and desire to be unmolested and the hysterical importunity of the woman—explain Jesus' reluctance to make Himself known through a miracle of healing, rather than the statement attributed to Him by Matthew, which Mark's earlier Gospel omits, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel"? If Jesus had refused to help the woman as a matter of principle He would not have been moved merely by her importunity. But He not only acceded to her request—but, according to Mark, He commended her humility. We may note in this connection that in the report of the commission to the Twelve the injunction not to go into any city of the Samaritans or of the Gentiles does not occur in St. Mark or in Q.

Such testimony as is advanced against the universalism of Jesus is overwhelmed by the positive testimony in its favor. It is in harmony with the affinity between His teaching and that of the prophets. It is in harmony with the teaching of John the Baptist which Jesus commended. John rebuked the particularism of the Jews and their pride in descent from Abraham by declaring that God could make new children of Abraham out of the stones. "And think not to say within yourselves: 'we have Abraham for our father'; for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto

Abraham." This is a Q passage, as is also the statement of Jesus embodying the same universalism: "I say unto you: they shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit at meat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God: but the sons of the kingdom (that is, the Jews) shall be cast out."

In later sources we have the parables of the Last Judgment, wherein no distinction is made between Jew and Gentile, in the dividing of the sheep and the goats. This is all the stronger testimony to the universalism of Jesus because it is embodied in Matthew's Gospel whose final editor was a "particularist."

Whereas the first Evangelist was, as we have said, a particularist, the third was a Hellenist. The Hellenistic Jews had been liberalized by their contact with the Greek world and that predisposed them in favor of universalism. It was therefore natural that Luke should give prominence to any traces of universalism in his sources about the teaching of Jesus, and as natural that the first Evangelist should omit them. In Luke's version of the visit to Nazareth His hearers are at first shown as admiring the gracious words which He spoke. They ask "Is not this Joseph's son?" But their antagonism does not develop till He has given utterance to the universalistic thought in pointing out God's favor to the Gentiles, the widow of Zarephath, and Naaman the Syrian. It is immediately following these words that they take offense and

threaten Him with violence. In Matthew's version we are told simply that His hearers were astonished at His doctrine and wisdom, but they took offense because He was the carpenter's son and the other members of His family were familiar acquaintances. According to this version they seemed to resent the prophetic claim of one of such humble origin. The universalistic element is thereby suppressed. The universalistic parable of the good Samaritan is given at length by Luke with its implication of the superiority of the Samaritan to the priest and Levite and quite naturally is omitted entirely by the first Evangelist. In spite of the particularism of the Jerusalem Church the universalism of Jesus may be clearly established from our records, and those critics err who hold that the universalism which ultimately triumphed in early Christianity was the result not of the teaching of the Founder but of the Apostle Paul.

#### IV

Nothing is clearer than the fact that Jesus rejected the priestly Apocalyptic theological idea of a God Who is remote from the world, or Who required to be kept in a favorable mood by sacrifices, or Who cared more about ceremonial righteousness than about mercy, justice and truth. Jesus' constant allusion to God as the loving Father desiring the welfare of "the least, the lowliest and the lost" is universally recognized and it should further be recognized that herein He simply extends

the prophetic idea of God as the Lover of the common people, and contradicts the priestly idea of a God haughty, remote, capricious, and dangerous. In His teaching about prayer Jesus portrays the loving communion of a person with a person which had its prototype in the ancient prayer-life of the patriarchs in the desert. The profundity of the teaching of Jesus should not be underestimated because its marvelous crystal clearness enables one to see to its very depths.

## V

Jesus' teaching as to the future of the world community has the closest connection with the prophetic doctrine on that subject. We will postpone a consideration of how He regarded His Own particular relation to the coming of the Kingdom till Chapter VIII. For the present we will anticipate the results there set forth with the statement that Jesus identified Himself with the prophetic Inaugurator of the Kingdom, the suffering Messiah of the Great Unknown.

We will now consider the social aspects of the Kingdom of God taken as the community of mankind organized for the benefit of all according to the Divine program.

There is one point on which the modern eschatologists and their opponents may cheerfully agree: Jesus expected the existing social order to pass away and be superseded by another. The difference between the two modern schools of thought

lies in their interpretation of the manner in which He considered that this revolutionary change was to be brought about. As we know, the eschatologists hold that He expected it to come about by the external descent of the miraculously organized Kingdom of Heaven from above; that He held that it was to be imposed from without by armies of angels who would first demolish the existing world order. This event would occur so soon as the transcendent God should select the time to give the matter His attention. The primary object of the Apocalyptic ethic was to secure to the devout Jew a place on the winning side of the hosts of Heaven and at the same time to force the hand of God Who had made a covenant with His people, wherein He agreed to send them the Kingdom when they should succeed in sufficiently fulfilling the difficult task of discharging their side of the contract, as stipulated in the elaborate requirements of the Torah. This ethic was based upon the quest for a separate personal salvation and the means employed were those of a Pharisaic scrupulosity of ceremonial observance especially in regard to the Sabbath. The Torah thus became a very complicated magic formula consisting not only of words but of ritualistic acts which had to be observed every waking hour. This kind of ethic had no organic or logical connection with the end to be obtained, and hence may be rightly called an interim-ethic,—one that is to be done away when it has fulfilled its object—and the modern eschatolo-

gists hold that the ethic of Jesus was of this variety. The adherents of the non-eschatological view hold that the ethic of Jesus was not intended to force or to persuade God to act but was intended to lead to a type of conduct which would spontaneously inaugurate the rule of God in the affairs of men through a moral, logical and developmental process, through adherence of mankind to the Divine law revealed by the prophets.

In support of their view the eschatologists point out the fact that the ethical teachings of Jesus are not practicable in the present world order. Prof. K. Lake, while recognizing the difficulty of applying the ethic of Jesus to modern conditions of life, nevertheless holds, in contrast to Weiss and Schweitzer, that the ethic of early Christianity was absolute and not conditional. In contrast to the statement of Schweitzer "The ethic of Jesus . . . is conditional in the sense that it stands in indissoluble connection with the expectation of perfection which is to be supernaturally brought about,"<sup>1</sup> and the further statement—"If ethics has to do only with the expectation of the supernatural consummation, its actual worth is diminished, since it is merely individual ethics and is concerned only with the relation of each single person to the Kingdom of God;"<sup>2</sup> Lake writes: "The Sermon on the Mount, which may be taken as a typical example of Christian ethics, is not a code which can be

<sup>1</sup> "The Mystery of the Kingdom of God," p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit. p. 103.

applied directly and simply to our ordinary daily life. It is impossible not to resist evil, it is undesirable to lend, distrusting no man, and it is ruinous to give to every one who asks. We cannot base a code of conduct on the literal observance of the Sermon on the Mount, if society is to continue and human nature remain as it is. That is exactly the point; early Christianity assumed that society was not going to continue, and that human nature was to be changed. With that assumption Christians were in a position to see and to appreciate the absolute principles of life at its highest. The effect of their eschatological belief was that they were enabled to see ethical problems in isolation—in an unnatural isolation if you like—and to reach nearer to reality than they could ever otherwise have done.”<sup>1</sup>

The fallacy in Prof. Lake's argument lies hidden in the following statement: “Early Christianity assumed that society was not going to continue, and that human nature was to be changed.” The teaching of Jesus was distinguished from that of His early followers in the belief not “that society was not going to continue,” but that society was not to continue as it is now organized. Human nature was to be indeed changed but by a moral process starting with repentance and not by a miracle. Human nature was not to be supernaturally transformed into some other kind of nature, but human nature was to become what it

<sup>1</sup> Kirsopp Lake, “Early Epistles of St. Paul,” p. 443.

was divinely intended to be—was to become true to its deeper self by recognizing its kinship with the divine. Human nature when it had found itself through repentance was to reorganize the social order on a different basis. In place of the natural pagan principle of selfishness and exploitation, society was to be reorganized on the principle of universal, loving service. In place of might, right was to be enthroned.

Jesus did not expect that His ethic would render its adherents “successful men” in the existing order. He did not expect them to grow rich by lending to every one that asked.

He expected them, if He did not require them, to be poor. But even so the poor are blessed, for the whole realm of God is theirs.<sup>1</sup> He did not expect that the policy of non-resistance would protect His adherents absolutely from aggression, but He believed that (perhaps, on the principle that it “takes two to make a quarrel”), in the face of persistent non-resistance, or, better, passive resistance, the aggressor would grow ashamed and desist. But however much the adherents of the Kingdom should suffer persecution, loss of property, or even of life they were to remember what happened to the prophets, the true exponents of the Kingdom of God, and were accordingly to rejoice to be found worthy, in fulfilling the prophet’s task, to share also in the prophet’s fate. At length the era will come when the mourners shall laugh; the meek will yet inherit

<sup>1</sup> Lk. 6: 20.



the earth; for the old order changeth and the present rich will lose their temporary relative advantage. But not in this will their misfortune consist, but rather in the absence on their part of a true appreciation of the Kingdom. They have become rich through violating the principles of the Kingdom. Therefore, in the revolution that is to come they who are now first will be the last because of the inferior quality of their social morality.

The ethic of Jesus can be fully understood only in relation to the renovated moral and social order which it is the immediate object of that ethic to inaugurate.

The social, revolutionary character of Jesus' ethic compared with that of His contemporaries is brought out in the following passage taken from the writings of O. Holtzmann: "In contrast to fastings, Sabbath observance, purification, sacrifice, and public prayers, Jesus constantly emphasizes that wherein He finds value for the social life of mankind. He always puts the social virtues above the most scrupulous observance of the ritualistic prescriptions. Accordingly, He derives the individual duties, not as the preaching of the scribes was accustomed, from that which was written in the law, but from the underlying thought of a social organization of mankind, in which mercy, justice, fidelity, and conciliation are supreme."<sup>1</sup>

Herein we have the fullest development of the

<sup>1</sup>O. Holtzmann in his "*Jesus Christus und das Gemeinschaftsleben der Menschen*," p. 22.

prophetic conception of the Messianic era and the direct contrast to the Apocalyptic conception. This brings us to the more detailed consideration of the eschatological problem which is to form the subject matter of the following Chapter.

## CHAPTER VII

## "THE ESCHATOLOGICAL PROBLEM"

IN studying the ethical and theological teachings of Jesus we have been at the same time dealing with the eschatological problem from the philosophical and psychological point of view. We have seen that His Theology and ethic is as essentially opposed to the Apocalyptic as the theology and ethic of the prophet was opposed to that of the priest. Moreover, the thought of Jesus about the Kingdom is a complete organic whole without the introduction of the catastrophic consummation. In fact, that idea is not only superfluous but it weakens, if it does not contradict, His theological and ethical position. If God be immanent and the Kingdom be in process of growth and development, a cataclysmic interruption would annul the value of the whole moral process. By the inclusion of the Apocalyptic expectation Jesus would have undermined the absolute authority of His Own ethic. It would of necessity become, as the eschatologists consistently hold that it is, merely a purely theoretical or interim ethic.

If an apologist should hold that, as history proceeds not only by a slow process of development, but also by means of sudden catastrophes, Jesus, in recognizing that fact, would but logically hold the Apocalyptic view, it would only be necessary to say

in reply that the cataclysms that the historian recognizes are of a different kind from those conceived of by the Apocalyptic. The former are revolutions or crises growing directly out of the developmental process itself, and their place is recognized in the prophetic interpretation of history, whereas the Apocalyptic intervention of God was conceived of as a miraculous and magical break in the historic process on a stupendous scale. To hold as some do, among them Harnack, that Jesus made a synthesis of these two divergent views, is to accuse Him of being a shallow eclectic.

Hard as it is to conceive how Jesus could have made a synthesis of these two antagonistic cosmic views, it is extremely easy to understand how His immediate followers might have been led to do so. We now turn to the study of the literary problem for further light upon this very question. If the teachings of Jesus were essentially anti-Apocalyptic, we should expect to find some traces of it in our text, as indeed we do find them.

If the Apocalyptic scheme of things were wholly foisted on to the teachings of Jesus we must explain the processes—logical or psychological—whereby this was accomplished. We should also inquire what element in the teaching of Jesus would most readily yield itself as an opening for the intrusion of the Apocalyptic idea. Furthermore, if the Apocalyptic view was thus grafted into the teaching of Jesus, we should expect to find marks of this process in our Gospels. This would be apt to show

itself in two ways—by the extensive interpolations into the sayings of Jesus of unauthentic matter, and, by the placing upon authentic sayings an Apocalyptic interpretation wholly absent from the thought of Jesus.

## I

It is needless to enumerate again the points of antagonism between the theology and ethic of Jesus and that of the Pharisees and other adherents of the Apocalypses. We are concerned now with the literary evidences of specific anti-Apocalyptic statements.

The most striking illustration of the specific opposition of Jesus to the whole Apocalyptic mechanism is found in His condemnation of their quest for "signs" which were to be interpreted as foreboding the nearness of the coming Kingdom. In Daniel and in the Apocalypses generally, certain arbitrary signs are given. In the Book of Daniel such signs are found in the covert allusions to Antiochus Epiphanes, the interpretation of Jeremiah's seventy years of the captivity as seventy-year weeks, the "time, times and half a time," the "abomination that maketh desolate," are illustrations of the kind of signs sought for. There was no moral value or significance underlying or connected with these signs. They were of no greater value than the signs of most popular superstitions.

In the Synoptics we have very direct condemnation of this quest for external signs on the part of

Jesus. In Mark 8:11-12, we read "Now the Pharisees came out and started to argue with Him asking Him a sign from heaven by way of tempting Him. But He sighed in spirit and said,

Why does this generation seek a sign?

I tell you truly, no sign shall be given this generation.

The form of expression "a sign from heaven" suggests that the Pharisees were asking for a special miracle but this idea falls away in the Q text which gives evidence of being the original form. According to this the Pharisees simply said, "We would seek from thee a sign."<sup>1</sup> According to Mark's version Jesus simply denied that the kind of sign sought would be given that generation. In the Q version, while refusing to give an arbitrary or external sign, Jesus offers them a sign with a deep moral significance, namely, that of repentance, in the "sign of Jonah." "But He said, an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign and a sign shall not be given it except the sign of Jonah. . . . The men of Nineveh shall stand up in judgment of this generation, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold here is more than Jonah."<sup>2</sup>

In Matthew 16:4, we have the rendering,

It is an evil and disloyal generation that craves a sign,  
And no sign shall be given it except the sign of Jonah.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, "Sayings of Jesus," p. 266, Sec. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Moffat's version, with footnote, p. 22.

In Matthew's rendering we have a combination of the Markan version with the allusion to the (moral) "sign of Jonah" in Q. According to Harnack, Q inserts "For as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites so shall the Son of Man be to this generation." The moral significance of the sign is here retained because Jesus compares Himself with Jonah as being an even greater preacher of repentance. But in Luke's version and also in that of Matthew, there is a tendency to make Jesus Himself a sign in the non-moral sense—just such a sign as Jesus said would not be given to that generation. Instead of comparing Himself with Jonah as a preacher of repentance, Jonah's sojourn for three days and three nights in the belly of the whale (an external non-moral sign) is compared to Jesus' three days and three nights spent in "the heart of the earth."<sup>1</sup> But the original meaning of Jesus is perfectly clear. The evil and adulterous (or disloyal) generation is guilty of inconsistency and folly. While neglecting to conform its life to God's Will through repentance it is yet looking for external signs of the miraculous coming of God. Instead of looking without it should look within and reform its character and conduct. Instead of looking for the Kingdom of God coming in the clouds it should follow the example of Nineveh, the Gentile city, and repent. The Gentile city of old shall stand up in the judgment to condemn the holy city

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 12: 40.

of the Jews, for Jerusalem refuses to repent at the preaching of a greater prophet than Jonah.

In Q we have the developmental idea of the Kingdom as a moral leavening and as a growth in the parables of the leaven and the mustard seed. In Q and Mark we have this anti-Apocalyptic polemic directed against the external sign of the coming of a ready-made kingdom. This fact removes any difficulty in the way of accepting the anti-Apocalyptic and developmental statement found in Luke 17:20. "On being asked by the Pharisees when the reign of God was coming, he answered them, The reign of God is not coming as you hope to catch sight of it. No one will say 'Here it is' or 'There it is,' for the reign of God is now in your midst."<sup>1</sup>

The survival of these distinct anti-Apocalyptic statements in Gospels which had been edited by those who had adopted the Apocalyptic views, is the strongest argument in favor of the conscious opposition of Jesus to the eschatology of the Apocalypses.

## II

If, as we are now prepared to assert, the Apocalyptic scheme of things were wholly foisted on to the teachings of Jesus, we must now inquire by what processes—logical or psychological—this reversal of His thought could have been accomplished. For not only did His earliest followers, who had

<sup>1</sup> Moffat's version.



known Him personally in life, in the years immediately following His death accept and teach the Apocalyptic expectation, but connected Jesus Himself with the coming Kingdom as its central, supernatural, Messianic Figure, Who was to come on the clouds, accompanied by angelic armies. They not only held this but they held that this had been explicitly taught by Jesus as He went in and out among them. We shall first consider their psychological processes, and then ascertain how they fit in with or are borne out by the literary evidences.

Our sources make it clear that the crucifixion of Jesus threw His Apostles into profound despair. The Apocalypses have been termed "the Gospel of despair" because the despairing mood is the psychological breeding-place of the Apocalyptic hope. There is first the belief that the historic process has failed. There is no hope except as that failure may be retrieved by a miracle. Analogously, the Apostles believed that the crucifixion of Jesus marked the failure of His Messianic career. Out of their despair there was born the hope that this failure of His Cause was to be retrieved by a miracle. In a few days after His death His Personal adherents came together testifying that one and all had received unmistakable personal evidence of His survival. This signified that God Himself had placed upon Jesus' claims to the Messiahship the final seal of approval. Nay more, He was now the Messiah in a far more glorious sense than they had ever

before dreamed. Without doubt He would come in a few weeks, or possibly months, and restore the kingdom to Israel, placing His loyal followers upon thrones of judgment. This view harmonized with the widely accepted Apocalyptic expectation of the Jews. The Apostles are quick to discover not only that their risen Master fits perfectly into the general expectation but that He gives to it a touch of immediacy and concrete reality. In fact, once the Apocalyptic view has been accepted, His place in it as witnessed by the Apostles becomes so reasonable that thousands of Jews soon accept their teaching, among them even members of the sect of the Pharisees against whom Jesus had directed His most unrelenting polemic. It became well-nigh self-evident to the disciples that their Master must clearly have foreseen this and hinted at it all along. Hence, they would diligently search His words to discover this latent meaning. Later, as time moved on, and the expectation failed to be realized the Apocalyptic mood prompted more desperate measures. There must be somewhere an Apocalypse of Jesus. The demand produced the supply. Apocalyptic oracles were already in circulation. One of these must undoubtedly have come from Him. It only remains to decide which one and then embody it in the Gospels. This probably explains the origin of the great Apocalyptic discourse in Mark 13, and its subsequent enlargement and editing by Matthew and Luke follow naturally.

## III

In its final form this Apocalypse, which exhibits so little the impress of the Personality and familiar style of Jesus, employs all the Apocalyptic device of predating and turning history into the form of prophecy and forging the authoritative name.

The probable connection between the supposed predictions and the events in history of the early Church thrown into the form of prophecy is clearly made by H. B. Streeter in the *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Gospels*—page 180 and following:

We notice first that the Apocalypse (i.e. St. Mark 13) purports to have been delivered *privately* to certain disciples. This is to explain how it is that it has hitherto been unknown to Christians in general—a mark of late date of publication. We are reminded of the secret traditions from particular Apostles produced by the later Gnostics. It is emphasized that the long delay of the Parousia, which was such a difficulty for the early Church, had been foreseen by the Master and privately explained to an inner circle. “But it is not the end yet”<sup>1</sup>—He had foreseen the series of persecutions and catastrophes, in each of which as it arrived the faithful had seen the harbinger of that end which never came. “Now take care, I am telling you of it all beforehand” (St. Mark 13: 28).<sup>2</sup> He had given also the reason of His delay. It was that there might be time for the Gospel to be first preached to all the Gentiles (13: 10)—a reason suggested by the thought in Romans 11 (cf. especially verses 11, 12, 25),

<sup>1</sup> St. Mark 13: 7.

<sup>2</sup> Genuine material is here used, as Jesus had expected persecutions alike for Himself and His followers.

that the conversion of Israel was predestinated, but postponed till the Gentiles had been gathered in. Famines, cf. that in Acts 11:28, earthquakes at Laodicea in 61 A.D., or Pompeii in 62 A.D. He had foretold, but these were but the beginnings of birth pangs (13:9), that is, of the calamities which it was generally expected would usher in the Messianic age. He had seen, too, great world-wide wars, verse 8, as in the year of the four Emperors culminating in the sack of Jerusalem, verses 14 to 20—a time in which "had not the Lord shortened it no flesh would have been saved"—all this the Master had foreseen. He had foreseen St. Paul, 13:9, accused before the Sanhedrin, five times scourged in the synagogue, standing before Felix and Festus (governors), before Agrippa and Nero (kings) for His Name's sake. He had foretold the horrors of the Neronian persecutions when the Christians first arrested informed, as Tacitus relates, on their brethren ("brother will betray brother to death" verse 12), and Christians were hated by all men, verse 13, accused, says Tacitus, of "*odium humani generis*." Lastly, He had foreseen one final peril, the false Christs and false prophets displaying signs and wonders, who might "deceive even the elect" at the last moment on the very eve of His return. . . .

The second object is to encourage those whose hopes are failing. Now at last He is near the door, 13:29, His coming will follow this last tribulation as closely as summer follows the fig-tree's leaves.<sup>1</sup>

We have seen that the object of the Apocalypses was to encourage with the hope of a speedy deliverance those who were suffering persecutions and

<sup>1</sup> "Oxford Studies," p. 180 f.

loss. Historic events are recited in the form of prophecy down to the time of the writer, after which the real prediction begins, usually, as in this case, of the speedy coming of the deliverer. Here, as in all the other Apocalypses, the actual crucial prediction has remained unfulfilled.

Before looking further for traces of the "eschatologizing" of the Gospels, we will ask what factor or factors in the teaching of Jesus would adapt themselves as affording an opening for the grafting in of the Apocalyptic idea. But two such elements need to be mentioned,—First, the primary message of Jesus, "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Second, the undoubted fact that Jesus had prophesied the destruction of the temple. In the next chapter we shall see that Jesus' prophecy of the destruction of the temple was based upon prophetic hostility to the cult and the conviction that it stood in the way of the triumph of the prophetic religion. By the time this Apocalypse was written the author considered the destruction of the temple in the light of a calamity. In the earliest or Markan version we are told that immediately after this prophecy Peter, James and John asked Jesus privately, on the Mount of Olives, "When shall these things be and what signs shall be when these things shall be fulfilled?"<sup>1</sup> In spite of the fact that Jesus had condemned the Pharisees for asking for a sign and had told them that they should have no sign except that of the prophet Jonah, He is now represented

<sup>1</sup> Mk. 13: 3, 4.

as acceding to a request made in private which He had refused to comply with in public.

In the next later account, incorporated in Matthew's Gospel, the audience has increased from the three to include the twelve. The sign asked for is not only that of the destruction of the temple but also "What shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?"<sup>1</sup> In order to realize the lateness of this passage we have only to recall that after the death of Jesus it was very plain that the Apostles had not been prepared for His resurrection. These words imply a thorough familiarity on their part with the thought not only of His resurrection but of His second coming.

The latest account of all, in Luke, chapter 21, represents the Apocalyptic discourse as no longer having been given to a small circle but as having been spoken *in the temple itself*, to a large gathering of people. Here again He is represented as naming a variety of the very "signs" that He had previously declared would not be given to that generation, and the "signs" are the usual external ones, such as, "signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and waves roaring" . . . (v. 25). In connection with the sign of the "abomination of desolation"<sup>2</sup> we have a significant aside to the understanding reader. "Let him that readeth understand." This plainly betrays the fact

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 24: 3.

<sup>2</sup> Mk. 13: 14; Mt. 24: 15.

that the Evangelist is not reporting a spoken discourse but is copying a document which bears all the earmarks of being a small pseudepigraphical Apocalypse. According to this small Apocalypse the "coming of the Son of Man" is to follow close upon the destruction of the temple. After this event, as time passed by without the promised fulfillment, new matter is introduced to explain that the delay had really been foreseen. Hence the Apocalypse bristles with contradictions. In one place we read that the Parousia is to follow immediately upon the destruction of Jerusalem (or the temple), "immediately after the tribulation of those days."<sup>1</sup> This gives us the date of the Apocalypse as immediately following that event. After the lapse of some time an explanatory statement is inserted (earlier in the discourse): "The Gospel must first be published among all nations."<sup>2</sup> When Luke's Gospel received its present form a greater period of time had elapsed since the destruction of the temple and the further words in explanation thereof are introduced. "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled."<sup>3</sup>

## IV

In his appendix to the "Oxford Studies" Streeter brings out the tendency of the Evangelists to elab-

<sup>1</sup> Mt. 24: 29; Mk. 13: 24.

<sup>2</sup> Mt. 24: 13; Mk. 13: 10.

<sup>3</sup> Lk. 21: 24.

orate the eschatological idea which only occurs in simple form in Q (in three passages which speak of the Kingdom as coming unexpectedly that is, without premonitory signs). His syllabus<sup>1</sup> contains the following summary:

In Q the emphasis is rather on the conception of the Kingdom as already present and to be extended by a process of gradual growth. Sayings implying that its appearance is future and catastrophic also occur, but they are not elaborated in any detail.

In St. Mark—especially in Chapter 13—the emphasis is on the future catastrophic conception, which is worked out with much detail of the conventional Apocalyptic type.

In Matthew the detail is still further elaborated, and both by what he adds and what he omits the catastrophic conception is enhanced.

The same tendency was no doubt in operation even before Q was written down, but some residuum of Apocalyptic eschatology in the authentic teachings of Christ is required to explain the beliefs of the early Church.

This "residuum" I believe, to have been (as indicated above) a combination of the proclamation "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (and the fact that Jesus considered Himself as the Prophet-Messiah), taken with His prophecy of the destruction of the temple which was misinterpreted by His followers as a catastrophic sign, instead of an event in the moral progress of the history of the Kingdom. We shall now consider a few instances

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit. p. 424.



wherein the Apocalyptic idea was read into authentic expressions of Jesus.

The most striking of these is the tendency to read an eschatological significance into the phrase "Son of Man." The Evangelists believed that this phrase embodied a cryptic Messianic sign. We have already seen that the phrase in the original Aramaic signified "a man" or "mankind," and that it was also used as a circumlocution for the personal pronoun. After it had been literally translated into Greek the Aramaic idiom was lost. Nevertheless the phrase frequently occurs in our Gospels as a self-designation by Jesus of which we cite the following: "The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head."<sup>1</sup> "The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them."<sup>2</sup> "The Son of Man (*ie.*, 'I') came eating and drinking."<sup>3</sup>

The first Evangelist shows the strongest tendency to read the Apocalyptic idea into the text. For example, Luke 9: 27—"But I tell you of a truth there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Kingdom of God"—becomes in Matthew 16: 28, "Verily, I say unto you there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming with His angels." The Lukan rendering is supported by Mark 9: 1.

<sup>1</sup> Mt. 8: 20; Lk. 9: 58.

<sup>2</sup> Lk. 9: 56.

<sup>3</sup> Mt. 11: 19. For further illustrations see Mt. 12: 32, 40; 13: 37; 16: 13.

The earlier rendering permits of a developmental interpretation on the understanding that the development is expected to move quickly. The Matthean version has become catastrophic and Apocalyptic. In place of the developmental parable of the seed growing secretly,<sup>1</sup> he substitutes the catastrophic parable of the tares, introducing the phrase "Son of Man" in the meaning of exalted Messiah. As this tendency is so plainly discernible it makes it extremely doubtful whether Jesus could ever have applied the expression to Himself in this Messianic sense. The only Q passage in which we find this expectation of Jesus of His Personal return is as follows: "Every one, therefore, that shall confess me before men, him will I (or the Son of Man) confess before the angels of God; but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before the angels of God."<sup>2</sup> Here Jesus is represented as laying the utmost stress upon His Own Person as an indispensable factor in individual salvation. It expresses the idea of "the Petrine Gospel" in the early Chapters of Acts, rather than Jesus' own Gospel of the Kingdom. It contradicts the sense of the Q passage immediately following, "And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man (or Me), it shall be forgiven him," and the well-authenticated passage in Matthew 7:21, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall

<sup>1</sup> Mk. 4: 26 f.

<sup>2</sup> See Harnack's "Sayings of Jesus," p. 262.

enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven."<sup>1</sup>

In one passage the first Evangelist falls into a self-contradiction by his introduction of the phrase "Son of Man" as equivalent to Messiah. According to the version of Mark, Jesus asks His disciples on the way to Caesarea Philippi "Whom do men say that I am?"<sup>2</sup> This becomes, in Matthew's version, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" If Jesus were accustomed to apply the phrase to Himself in the sense of Messiah, He would thereby have given the answer to His question in stating it. Hence, there would have been no occasion for surprise at the answer of Peter.

In conclusion we will note further illustrations of the tendency of Matthew to eschatologize the Gospel Message.

He introduces the Apocalyptic phrase "consummation of the ages" not elsewhere found in the Gospels. He employs the Apocalyptic "weeping and gnashing of teeth" six times, which does not occur in Mark and occurs but once in Luke. He omits two sayings which imply the presence of the Kingdom, "I saw Satan fall from Heaven" and "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation, for behold it is in your midst," which St. Luke records and which it may fairly be assumed existed in Q.

We have now seen that the presumption created

<sup>1</sup>See below, p. 135.

<sup>2</sup>Mk. 8: 27. Cf. Mt. 16: 13.

by the antagonism between the theology and ethic of Jesus and that of the Apocalypses, that he rejected the eschatological Messianic expectation, is corroborated by the study of the Synoptic Gospels which show evidence of that idea as having been interpolated on a large scale and its meaning forced into authentic sayings of Jesus. We are logically forced to the conclusion that there was no real "Apocalyptic residuum" in the Gospel of Jesus. We now will resume the task of reconstructing that Gospel in its positive aspects.

## CHAPTER VIII

## THE HISTORIC JESUS—THE PROPHET MESSIAH

THE theology of the Catholic Church centered in a series of questions concerning the Person of Jesus and grouped under the general designation of "Christology." All the emphasis came to be concentrated on the Person of Jesus as the center of theology and His own theological teachings were not only ignored but unconsciously contradicted or set aside. We have now to inquire into the question of Jesus' own view of His mission and office, as revealed in His self-consciousness, so far as that finds expression in His authentic teachings. To do so we must set aside the traditional Christological assumptions and examine the development of Christology with a view to warrant how much of it can be substantiated by the authority of Jesus Himself.

We have now to search for the starting point of the Christological development. The word "Christology" is derived from "Christos" the Greek translation of Messiah. "Christology," therefore, begins with the identification of Jesus with the Messiah. This identification has already taken place in our earliest document. "The compiler of Q could not imagine otherwise than that Jesus was the Messiah, consecrated as the Son of God at the Baptism."<sup>1</sup> This might seem to be the earliest

<sup>1</sup> Harnack "Sayings of Jesus," p. 243.

statement of New Testament Christology. As a matter of fact it is the third stage in Christological development. It dates the Messiahship from the descent of the Holy Spirit at the time of the Baptism of Jesus accompanied by the Voice from Heaven,

Thou art my son, the Beloved,  
today have I become thy father.

This was the form of Christology which later became known as "Adoptionism." An earlier form is that which is found in the "Petrine Christology" in the discourses attributed to Peter in the early Chapters of Acts. In this form the Messiahship of Jesus begins at the resurrection and is to be vindicated at the Parousia. Though exalted to the right hand of God, Jesus, so far as His Messiahship is concerned, is a *Christus futurus*—is to become Messiah at the Parousia. But back of this as the earliest form of Messiahship we have Jesus' own conception of His Mission. This question is to receive further consideration which will point to the conclusion that Jesus regarded Himself as the Messiah in the sense that He was the Prophetical Inaugurator of the Kingdom of God.

We now have reached three steps in the New Testament development of Christology: (1) Jesus appears as the Prophet-Messiah; (2) Jesus is preached as "the Messiah Who is to come"; (3) Jesus is regarded as having been made Messiah at His Baptism. Later on the beginning of the Mes-

siahship is dated back to the birth of Jesus in the "Gospel of the Nativity" which introduces both the political and supernatural elements by providing genealogies through Joseph back to David, and at the same time denying Him human paternity through His conception by the Holy Ghost. In Matthew's version Mary's Son is given the name of Jesus because "He will save His people from their sins."<sup>1</sup> In Luke's Gospel the angel Gabriel is made to promise that the Son of Mary would sit upon the throne of David and "reign over the house of Jacob forever and to His reign there will be no end."<sup>2</sup> Here we have a synthesis of the political-monarchical with the Apocalyptic, for this view evidently expresses the expectation of the early Church which awaited fulfillment. This represents a fourth step in Christological development. The fifth step is found in St. Paul's conception of the Christ as the "Heavenly Man."<sup>3</sup> This Messiah was divine by nature. Yet it would have been "a prize" for Him to have been "on an equality with God"—"He did not snatch at equality with God" . . . "Therefore God raised Him high and conferred on Him a Name above all Names."<sup>4</sup> The final stage is taken in the prologue to the Fourth Gospel which makes Him Christ from before the beginning of creation, co-eternal with God, and co-equal. We note in

<sup>1</sup> Mt. 1: 21.

<sup>2</sup> Lk. 1: 32, 33.

<sup>3</sup> I Cor. 15: 47.

<sup>4</sup> Phil. 2: 5-11.

passing that St. Paul's view was perilously near the "Homoiousion" which was condemned by the Council at Nicea as the Arian heresy.

The omission of the Gospel of the Infancy in Q and St. Mark may be due to the view which they seem to have held that the Messiahship of Jesus began at the Baptism. Its omission from the Fourth Gospel may be due to the fact that the author held that the Messiahship was not to be dated from the conception of Jesus but as existing from eternity. St. Paul's omission may, similarly, be due to his opinion that Jesus existed as a Divine Being before His birth. In St. Matthew and St. Luke the idea is implied that the Messiahship of Jesus was associated with the circumstances of His Nativity, but at the same time they seem to incorporate the earlier view that it was conferred at the Baptism. Having summarized the development of Christological doctrine in the New Testament we now return to investigate more fully the "Christology" of Jesus Himself.

Harnack has pointed out that all of the Christological elements in Q are contained in the introductory stories of the Baptism and Temptation. Elsewhere it is only implicit with the exception of the doubtful passages about the second coming. To quote once more from Harnack, "The Christology of the source as the compiler understood it, presents a perfectly simple and consistent picture. The compiler Q could not imagine otherwise than that Jesus was the Messiah, consecrated as Son of God



at the Baptism; all the sayings of his compilation, therefore, stand out against this background. If, however, we think away the introduction the resultant picture is essentially different. We have now before us a compilation of sayings in which the speaker is a teacher, a prophet, one who was more than a prophet—the final decisive Messenger of God; but so surely as he demands unconditional obedience to his commands, in which the Will of God is expressed, and calls upon men to follow him, so little does he do this with the expressed self-witness; ‘I am the Messiah.’”<sup>1</sup>

In regard to Mark's Gospel as the result of critical investigation he reaches a similar conclusion, “that our Lord during the first and longest period of His ministry did not speak of Himself as Messiah (because He at first neither regarded Himself as the Messiah, nor indeed could so regard Himself), and even rejected the title of Messiahship when it was applied to Himself, but that, on the other hand, He was possessed with the strongest conviction that, as a Messenger of God, He was entrusted with a Mission of decisive import, and that He knew God as none other knew Him—a conviction to which He again and again gave expression.”<sup>2</sup>

The weight of critical opinion is on the side of the view that the Messiahship of Jesus remained a secret till the incident on the road to Cæsarea Philippi when He accepted Peter's designation of

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit. p. 244.

<sup>2</sup> Harnack, Op. cit. p. 244.

Himself as the Christ. Harnack holds that in accepting the title He applied it to Himself in the futuristic sense. This is the view of the eschatologists who believe that Jesus had become convinced of the necessary failure of His prophetic mission and that He looked for the retrieval of that failure by His own return, after His death, as the supernatural "Son of Man." This explanation is as superficial as it is easy. We shall examine our records of this incident with a view to ascertaining if the true interpretation of Jesus' thought of the Messiahship is not the prophetic conception of the "Suffering Servant."

This incident is omitted in Q and finds its simplest recital in Mark 8: 27, f:—"Then Jesus and His disciples set off from the villages of Cæsarea Philippi; and on the road He inquired of His disciples 'Who do people say that I am?' 'John the Baptist,' they told Him, 'though some say Elijah and others say you are one of the prophets.' So he inquired of them 'And who do you say I am?' Peter replied, 'You are the Christ.' Then He forbade them to tell anyone about Him. And He proceeded to teach them that the Son of Man had to endure great suffering, to be rejected by the elders and scribes, to be killed and after three days to rise again; He spoke of this quite freely. Peter took Him and began to reprove Him for it. But He turned on him and noticing His disciples reprovèd Peter, telling him 'Get behind Me, you Satan! Your outlook is not God's but man's.'"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Moffat's version.

The passages in Matthew about Peter the Rock on whom the Church is to be built are generally regarded as a late interpolation, as well as the words of praise commending Peter's insight. After accepting the title of Messiah Jesus enjoins secrecy, we are bound to think, because the popular meaning of that word was quite different from His own. He proceeds to explain to the Twelve that His Messiahship entails suffering and death at the hands of the elders, high priests and scribes. Words are here introduced by the Evangelist foretelling the resurrection, but in view of the absence of that expectation in the minds of the incredulous disciples when it was announced to them, this must have been introduced as an afterthought by the Evangelist. The words—"Peter took Him and began to reprove Him for it," are incongruous with the words revealing the stupendous miracle of the resurrection which they immediately follow. The real interpretation, then, seems to be that having accepted the title of Messiah Jesus proceeds to explain the nature of the Messiahship, which is not that of a conquering king, or the supernatural Being coming in the future on the clouds of Heaven, but is that of the Prophetic Servant of God Who gives His life in inaugurating the Kingdom. Peter's rebuke arose from the fact that he did not accept any such mournful interpretation of the Messiahship, but looked upon it from the monarchical point of view with all its attendant splendor. This explains the retort of Jesus "Get behind me, you Satan, your outlook is not God's

but man's." This reminds us of the story of the Temptation in which Jesus rejected the temptation to become a world-conquering Messiah, in which He is represented as saying to the Tempter—"Get thee hence, Satan." Peter now appears in the rôle of Tempter and hence the severity of the epithet "Satan." In this instance, as in the earlier, Jesus refused to be an exploiting Prince. Jesus is then represented as warning His followers that, if they are to continue to follow Him, they must deny themselves and take up their crosses and follow Him and be prepared to lose their lives for His sake and for the Gospel's.

## I

Having ascertained that the Christology of Jesus consisted in His self-consciousness as the Prophet-Messiah, we have now to take account of His prophetic career.

We have seen that the doctrine of Jesus clearly belonged to the prophetic school. It is very clear that He was recognized as a prophet by His contemporaries. At His "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem He is hailed by "the multitude" as Jesus, "the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee."<sup>1</sup> After His resurrection certain of His disciples are reported by St. Luke to have characterized Him as "a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people."<sup>2</sup> In the Petrine discourses early in Acts

<sup>1</sup> Mt. 21: 11.

<sup>2</sup> Lk. 24: 19.

He is identified with the "prophet like unto Moses," promised in Deuteronomy. It is also equally clear that He referred to Himself under the title of "prophet."<sup>1</sup> His method of teaching resembled that of the prophets and contrasted with that of His contemporaries, "For He taught them like an authority, not like their own scribes."<sup>2</sup> His Gospel like that of the prophets contains two parts—the ministry of rebuke and the ministry of consolation. This latter was central in that the proclamation of the nearness of the Kingdom was fraught with a promise of deliverance from all personal and social ills.

Jesus constantly expressed the highest admiration for the ancient prophets. This admiration was extended to John the Baptist because Jesus recognized him to be a true prophet. He declared that all the prophets were living in the Kingdom of God.<sup>3</sup> He pronounced those to be blessed who are found worthy to share in the persecutions that had been meted out to the prophets. He exhorted His followers to be like the prophets. As we shall see, it was part of His program for the ushering in of the Kingdom of God to organize a movement of prophets. Jesus' prophetic message of rebuke was directed against the rich and the Pharisees and the hierarchy—all of whom belonged to the exploiting classes. He denounced the exploiters of His day,

<sup>1</sup> Mt. 13: 57; Mk. 6: 4; Lk. 4: 17, 24; 13: 33.

<sup>2</sup> Mt. 7: 29.

<sup>3</sup> Lk. 13: 28.

as the prophets had denounced the exploiters of their day, as the enemies of the Kingdom of God. His indignation was directed against those who are harsh toward their fellows, the vengeful who look to God for forgiveness while exacting the uttermost farthing from their debtors; against the blind leaders of the blind, who stand in the way of the people's attaining the knowledge that is essential to their welfare; against the mammon worshippers who hypocritically pretend to be worshippers of God, those who oppress the weak, the children, the widows; against those who shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men, who declare themselves the favorites of God while holding the harlots, the publicans, and the Gentiles to be eternally damned. In God's day, Jesus declared, those who have made themselves first shall be last, for the publicans, harlots and Gentiles will enter the Kingdom of Heaven by the way of penitence while the alleged righteous ones will exclude themselves by their own exclusiveness.

The literature of invective reaches a climax of fury in the discourse against the scribes and Pharisees.<sup>1</sup> The pretensions to righteousness, to religious authority, to high moral character, are relentlessly unmasked. "Woe to you, you irreligious scribes and Pharisees! You are like tombs, whitewashed; they look comely on the outside, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all manner of im-

<sup>1</sup> Mt. 23; and Lk. 11.

purity. So to men you seem just, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.”<sup>1</sup>

Jesus in this discourse saw His struggle with the Pharisees as a continuation of the warfare of the prophets against the adherents of external and ceremonial religion. He challenged them, the descendants of those who slew the prophets, to “fill up the measure of their fathers” by slaying Him, the Successor of the prophets. Their ceremonial scrupulosity aroused nothing but His scorn and contempt. Having been reproved by the Pharisees for neglecting the customary ceremonial ablutions before eating, Jesus replied: “Not that which entereth into a man but that which proceedeth out of the heart defileth a man.”<sup>2</sup> He uttered the basic principle which divided the ceremonial from the prophetic type of religion. In so doing, as Holtzmann declares, “Jesus pronounces, with one sweep, all the laws which are contained in Deuteronomy, chapters 11 to 15, and which abundantly engaged the attention of the Pharisees, to be without binding force.”<sup>3</sup> Holtzmann might have gone further by stating that Jesus regarded these ordinances as useless and absurd.

Against the priestly exploiters of His day Jesus proceeded not only with words, as against the Pharisees, but with deeds.

Jesus broke radically with legalism and Judaism.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 23: 27, 28, Moffat's version.

<sup>2</sup> Mt. 15: 17; Mk. 7: 18.

<sup>3</sup> O. Holtzmann, *Op. cit.* p. 22.

(Later on His disciples undertook to repair the breach.) His prophetic campaign was carried on against the temple cultus. Like His predecessors, the insurgent prophets, He held the temple and the Jewish hierarchy to be the archenemy of true religion. It was so false that it could not hope for reformation. It must be destroyed.

The ancient prophets, Amos and Jeremiah, had prophesied the destruction of the temple in Bethel and of the temple of Jerusalem in their own day on the ground that they were false to the true religion of Jehovah. The Great Unknown had declared that it was absurd to suppose that any temple built with hands could serve as the abiding place of God. In the spirit of the two former Jesus prophesied the overthrow of the temple and its complete destruction. In characteristic homely phrase, Jesus had expressed His view of the hopelessness of reforming institutionalized Judaism as follows:

No one sews a piece of undressed cloth on an old coat,  
For the patch breaks away from it, and the tear is made  
worse;

Nor do men pour fresh wine into old wine-skins,  
Otherwise the wine-skins burst, and the wine is spilt—  
the wine-skins are ruined.

They put fresh wine into fresh wine-skins and so both are  
preserved.<sup>1</sup>

We know that Jesus prophesied the destruction of the temple and we are on safe ground in holding

<sup>1</sup> Mt. 9: 16, 17, Moffat's version.



that this prophecy carried with it a hostile intent. We have evidence that when the disciples lapsed into the Apocalyptic belief they regarded this prophecy as the prediction of a catastrophe. According to Mark Jesus was charged at His trial with having made the statement "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands and within three days I will build another not made with hands."<sup>1</sup> In Matthew's version the statement is softened to read: "I am able to destroy this temple of God and build it again in three days."<sup>2</sup> Both these Evangelists declare that this was a false charge, or at least that it was made by false witnesses. Yet from other sources we can get a pretty clear confirmation of the view that this was precisely what Jesus did say. He may have said it only to the Twelve, and perhaps this was the "secret" which Judas betrayed. The Johannine account, though later, and bearing marks of editorial interpretation, nevertheless is confirmatory of the testimony of the witnesses. Instead of the words "I will destroy this temple made with hands," the Fourth Evangelist gives, as an authentic utterance of Jesus, accompanying the cleansing of the temple, the words—"Destroy this sanctuary and I will raise it up in three days."<sup>3</sup> His actual words on this occasion are interpreted as showing "zeal for the temple" instead of hostility toward it. The words are alle-

<sup>1</sup> Mk. 14: 58.

<sup>2</sup> Mt. 26: 61.

<sup>3</sup> John 2: 19.

gorized by the Evangelist, by being made to refer to the temple of His Body, its destruction at the crucifixion, and its subsequent resurrection, but he is constrained to admit that the Apostles did not realize that this was the meaning of Jesus' statement till after the resurrection. According to the Fourth Evangelist Jesus gave this answer to those who asked Him to state by what right and authority He cleansed the temple. In Mark's Gospel when this question was put to Him we are told He refused to give any answer till His questioners had answered Him the question by what authority John the Baptist was acting.<sup>1</sup> His questioners refused to answer, whereupon Jesus refused to answer them, thereby implying that both He and John were acting under the same prophetic Heaven-born authority.

Holtzmann,<sup>2</sup> was the first critic in modern times to recognize the fact that Jesus' claim to prophetic authority to destroy the temple, and to erect another religious movement on its ruins, was equivalent to a claim to the Messiahship.

Jesus in attacking the money-changers and the dealers in sacrificial animals was striking at a priestly monopoly which was an instrument of graft and oppression. The words with which He accompanied the act are illuminating. He quoted from the universalistic Great Unknown the *ideal* "My house shall be the house of prayer for all na-

<sup>1</sup> Mk. 11: 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Leben Jesu*, p. 327.

tions"; from Jeremiah He quotes the *actual*—"but ye have made it a den of thieves."<sup>1</sup> Mark gives the earlier quotation in full; the later Synoptists omit the words "for all the peoples." From the evidence we may infer that Jesus considered it a part of His religious campaign to overthrow the temple worship and its supporters. He said in effect: "I will destroy this temple made with hands, the perverter of true religion, the exploiter of men, the source of false conceptions of God, and, in a brief space, I will establish a new temple in its place, not a physical temple built with hands, but a spiritual society of penitent souls united to God, seeking first His Kingdom and bringing it in through hearing my words and doing them." It is perfectly plain that the representatives of the hierarchy understood perfectly what they were doing when they sought and accomplished the death of Jesus, their great prophetic antagonist.

## II

Having a clear idea of what Jesus aimed at, we have now to consider the program which He proposed as the method for attaining the end.

Let us first of all ask what position Jesus assigned to Himself in the movement which He was inaugurating. He had no doubt that He was its Divinely appointed Leader. Jesus was a prophet but at the same time He was more than a prophet. What the

<sup>1</sup> Isa. 56: 7; Jer. 7: 11. See also Mark 11: 7; Mt. 21: 13; Lk. 19: 46.

earlier prophets had foreseen and striven for was to be accomplished through His agency and Leadership. He said to His followers, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear; for verily I say unto you that many prophets (and kings) desired to see the things which ye see and have not seen them, and to hear the things which ye hear, and have not heard them."<sup>1</sup> Like the prophets He did not lay the crucial emphasis on His Person but on His Message which was God's truth. He did not make Himself the center of a cult to be an object of worship, but He did put Himself in a position of Leadership and appealed for obedience on the part of all sincere seekers after the Kingdom. To enter the Kingdom it was not enough to call Him "Lord," or to preach in His Name. Only he who heard His words and obeyed them was like the man who founded his house on a rock while he who built on any other doctrine (such as that of the scribes and Pharisees) built on shifting sands. Jesus is conscious of such a solidarity existing between Himself and the realm of His Father that He holds (according to Q) that every one that confesses Him before men He will confess before God and the angels. In Mark's version we have probably an earlier and more accurate rendering of the same saying: "For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, I shall be ashamed of him,"

<sup>1</sup>This is a Q passage, Section 26. Cf. Mt. 13: 16, 17; Lk. 10: 23, 24.

or, "the Son of Man shall be ashamed of him in the coming Kingdom."

Jesus disclaims any title to exceptional goodness when He says on being addressed as "Good Master" — "Why callest thou Me good?"<sup>1</sup> In this revelation of His self-consciousness we see that in contrast to the self-consciousness of goodness that marked the Pharisees, Jesus felt that He (no matter how complete His devotion of Himself to the Father) was no better than the normal man should be. God is good in a sense in which no other, including Jesus Himself, is good. Jesus gives Himself a central position through the authority which He claimed to offer consolation to the needy and afflicted, as where He makes His own the words of the Deutero-Isaiah:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me;  
for he has consecrated me to preach the  
Gospel to the poor,  
He has sent me to proclaim release for the  
captives  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to set free the oppressed,  
to proclaim the Lord's year of favor.<sup>2</sup>

Another passage in which Jesus presents Himself in the rôle of Revealer of God and consoler of men through His Leadership is found in the so-called Johannine passage in the Synoptics.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mt. 19: 17.

<sup>2</sup> Lk. 4: 18, Moffat's version.

<sup>3</sup> Mt. 11: 25-30; Lk. 10: 21-22.

Prof. Bacon in an article in the *Harvard Theological Review*, October, 1916, adopts the opinion of E. Norden (in his "Agnostos Theos") that this passage is a quotation of a fragment of Lyric Wisdom. In Luke 11: 49, Jesus quotes a passage which He attributes to the "Wisdom of God." The same passage is given by Matthew as an original saying of Jesus. The former passage is arranged by Bacon to bring out its lyric form as follows:

I

I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,  
Because thou didst hide these things from the wise and  
understanding  
And didst reveal them unto babes.  
Yea, Father, for such was the good pleasure in thy sight.

II

All things were revealed to me by my Father;  
But none hath known the Son save the Father;  
Neither hath any known the Father save the Son  
And he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him.

III

Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden;  
Take my yoke upon you and learn of me,  
And ye shall find rest for your souls,  
For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

This passage has been held to teach, in the middle strophe, that Jesus claimed an exclusive knowledge of the Father, in spite of the fact that in the first strophe Jesus represents these things as having been revealed "unto babes." But the essential

thing for us is that, whether this be an original lyric of Jesus, or one which He by quoting has made His own, He nevertheless has, as mystic God-knower and prophet, the office of God-revealer and consoler through His Example and Leadership.

Jesus' mission was militant. In a Q passage He asks "Think ye that I am come to send peace on the earth?" and answers, "I am not come to send peace but a sword." His militancy, however, was purely moral and in no sense contemplated the use of force. What He expected of His loyal followers comes out in His Commission to the Twelve, in Matthew 10:5 and following. They are to proclaim the near approach of the Kingdom. They are to exercise the ministry of healing, but they are not to engage in exploitation of any kind. They are not to carry money, extra clothing, or provisions, nor to accept any of these things beyond their immediate needs. They are not to accept money at all. They are to subsist upon such hospitality as may be offered them freely. They are going forth to encounter danger as a direct result of their doctrine. They are to go out as sheep among wolves. They are warned that prophetic persecutions and sufferings await them. The claims of the Kingdom are to be put before the claims of the family and of life itself. He who goes forth as a follower of Jesus takes his life in his hands. He who carries the cross—the burden of the message of the Kingdom—carries also the implement on which he may meet his death. No promise of reward is

contained in connection with this hazardous enterprise. The fate which is to overtake the Teacher is still more likely to overtake the disciples. The reward is spiritual as we learn from the last Beatitude in the Sermon on the Mount in the exhortation, "Rejoice and be exceeding glad for great is your reward in Heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

The prophet's reward consists in his opportunity to co-operate with God; and Jesus refuses to hold out to His followers any promise of special preferment in the coming Kingdom. This comes out very clearly in His refusal of the request of Zebedee's children to be permitted to sit at His right hand and His left in the coming Kingdom.<sup>1</sup> Instead He promises them nothing but the privilege of being baptized with Him in the baptism of blood and of drinking with Him the cup of death. This incident casts doubt upon the authenticity and genuineness of the passage wherein Jesus, in answer to a request of Peter to know what the Apostles were to get out of their devotion to Him, is alleged to have said that they should sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. According to Q—Jesus once said—"They who follow me shall sit on thrones." Perhaps the Evangelist finding this isolated statement invented the setting as a framework for the saying. As for the saying itself it may easily have been derived from the book of Enoch—traces of the influence of which we have

<sup>1</sup> Mt. 20: 20.



already noted as frequent in the Gospels. In Enoch, chapter 108, verse 12, we read,

And I will bring forth in shining light those who have  
loved my holy name and I will seat each on the  
throne of his honor.

Another similar Enoch passage is found in chapter 51, verse 3:

And the elect ones shall in those days sit on my throne.

But the program of Jesus comprehended a moral Leadership of *conduct*, as well as of words. This program of conduct namely, the prophetic law of service, was not merely valid as a "war measure" but it was intended both to inaugurate the Kingdom and to remain its underlying principle of community life after it should be established. This new principle of action was to supersede "the lordship of the Gentiles" as well as every other form of exploitation which the prophets and Jesus had denounced. This brings us back to the consideration of the ethic of Jesus which we shall show not to have been an interim-ethic but an absolute, which was not regarded as a thing of mere speculative interest, but as an actual program to govern the daily conduct of ordinary men and women. To be sure its demands sound highly impracticable in the present order but that simply serves to accentuate the fact that the ethic of Jesus postulates the new social order founded upon the divine principle of loving co-operation and service.

Many have supposed that Jesus expected all people to live without toil, directly clothed and fed by the Father's bounty when the Kingdom of God should come. This has been inferred from the underlying assumption that He conceived that future coming of the Heavenly community in accordance with the Apocalyptic ideas. Because He pointed out that the lilies of the field are clothed without spinning and the wild birds are fed without sowing, reaping or gathering into storehouses, and because He urged men not to anxiously accumulate a provision against the days to come, it is inferred that He believed men could live without work. His own life and the lives of the Apostles during the period of His ministry are taken to indicate that He Himself lived without toil.

It is true that Jesus nowhere categorically advocates the necessity of daily labor. But does He not everywhere clearly assume its necessity? From boyhood He worked at the trade of His father and was known to His fellow townsmen as "Jesus, the Carpenter." At times we have glimpses of Him assisting His fishermen disciples at their work, for this doubtless is the historic basis underlying the stories of the miraculous catch of fishes. His approval of toil comes out constantly in His parables. The laborers in the vineyard, the sowers and the reapers, the shepherd in the hills, the fishermen at their nets, the woman mixing leaven with her meal, the man building his house on a rock, the merchant on his journey, the steward administering an estate,

the servants increasing the talents entrusted them by trading—all of these and others Jesus uses not only with implied approval but as actual illustrations of essential aspects of the Kingdom of God. Moreover, the law of service itself is unthinkable except as it is connected with work for others. All of this shows plainly that Jesus' thought of the community was not that of the Apocalypse with its visions of miraculous abundance, but was that of a society of men performing their daily tasks, delivered from all anxiety and worry about the future.

The more I read the scattered precepts which belong to the body of the ethical teaching of Jesus—the more am I convinced that the absolute quality of that ethic is summed up in the single phrase "Be like God." Not only does His ethic consist in the synthesis of the "first and second commandments of the law," love to God and love to man (the latter put on complete parity with the former and made to include love for enemies), but, because men are really sons of God, this attitude is held to be perfectly normal. The gist of the whole matter is found in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel, the 5th chapter, 43-48: "You have heard the saying, 'You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those that persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in Heaven:

He makes his sun rise on the evil and the good,  
and sends rain on the just and the unjust.

For if you love only those who love you, what  
reward do you get for that?

do not the very taxgatherers do as much?  
and if you only salute your friends, what is  
special about that?

do not the very pagans do as much?  
You must be perfect as your heavenly Father is per-  
fect.<sup>1</sup>

The ethic of Jesus is conceived as the spontaneous product of a life lived in love to God and in service to the universal community of mankind. It is an ethic of true inwardness bearing the outward fruits of a life conscious of its solidarity with God and the company of God's human children. There is no externally imposed law. The law of God "written in the heart," as the prophet named it, will not only secure the fulfillment of the commandments of the law, but a man's conduct will be the spontaneous expression of his character and not a mere outward conformity to an external law from fear of punishment or hope of reward. If a man is inwardly in personal relation with God, his conduct will surpass what is required in the law. In Q we have a saying which seems to support a Rabbinical and legalistic regard for the letter of the law. "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for an iota of the law to lapse."<sup>2</sup> Taken in contrast to Jesus' customary disregard of the ceremonial law this seems a paradox. The paradox

<sup>1</sup> Moffat's version.

<sup>2</sup> Lk. 16: 17.

disappears, however, if we keep in mind the distinction which Jesus made between "the least" and the "great" commandments of the law. According to Jesus "the least commandment" is of greater importance because it has to do not only with external conduct but with the sources of that conduct in the inner life. The least commandment is what the prophet meant by the law written in the heart. "Thou shalt not kill" is a great commandment of the ancient law. "Thou shalt not hate or be angry" is the corresponding least commandment,—of little consequence in the eyes of the unthinking man, but of greater consequence in the eyes of God,—determining the inner temper. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" is another great commandment. The least commandment is "Thou shalt be pure in heart." "Thou shalt not steal" is included and surpassed in the commandment "Thou shalt not worship mammon." The "great commandment" determines what a man does—the "least commandment" concerns both what a man is as well as what he does, and it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one of these "least commandments" to drop out of the moral law.

What the eschatologists have held to be an "interim-ethic" is in reality an absolute and eternal ethic whose binding force is present and immediate; whereas our own ethic which holds the ethic of Jesus to be impracticable is really the interim ethic. We say of that ethic, as Kirsopp Lake seems to say, "We cannot live up to this under existing social

conditions and the present quality of human nature." Jesus says, in effect, "The present social order and present human nature are not true to God, they must therefore be changed." We say, "As the Kingdom of God has not yet come we must defend ourselves, accumulate property, and defend it." But in so doing we put our own temporal interests and temporary comfort before the Cause of the Kingdom. Like the Apocalyptic writers we are waiting for the miracle of the Kingdom to happen. Jesus bade us seek the Kingdom,—not to wait for it but to initiate it by living as its true citizens are to live. He realized all that this demanded in the way of personal loss and injury. For the interim they would be as sheep among wolves—they would suffer the fate of martyrs and prophets, but in the end which He believed to be not far distant the meek would inherit the earth.

Our "modern" point of view is that of Nietzsche who thought the Sermon on the Mount "a doctrine for weaklings." In reality it is the doctrine of the world's moral heroes,—the prophets, and those who follow their lead. These are the true "supermen" who are willing to find their lives by losing them for the sake of the Kingdom. Their greatness is measured by the capacity for sacrifice. The strong man is the man who is strong to suffer. The superhuman strength and divine greatness of Jesus is manifested upon the cross whereon He prayed for His enemies, and it is by the power of this Cross that He is to redeem and renovate the world.

## III

In spite of the absolute emphasis which the older theology has put upon the death of Jesus as the crowning element in His life of redeeming love, it has not yet done justice to its profound significance. This has been because it has largely regarded His death as a drama staged by God for the benefit of mankind. It has regarded that death as arising from a predetermined necessity. It has "mechanized" it. It has found in it an analogy to the death of sacrificial victims required by the priestly theology. Finally, it has regarded it as "substitutionary" in the sense that the martyrdom of the Son of God has been held as forever excusing the martyrdom of the sons of God.

By connecting the death of Jesus with His prophetic teaching and prophetic career and by recognizing that it represents a universal prophetic principle and not the priestly substitution of an innocent victim for a guilty sinner; and by recognizing the still profounder fact that that death was not a mere legalistic compounding of sin but an aggressive incident in the warfare for the eradication of all sinning—we shall be able to understand the significance which the death of Jesus had in His own Mind as the crowing act in His career as Inaugurator of the Reign of God.

Jesus did not die simply because He claimed to be the Messiah. It was not an offense against the Jewish law to make such a claim. He died be-

cause He was the Messiah of the prophetic type. In the long conflict between the Hebrew prophets and the exploiting priesthood (which was a prop and mainstay of the existing evil world-order of exploitation) the priesthood, by every possible device, had sought to silence the prophets by threats of punishment and, if these did not avail, by death. The situation in the days of Jesus is thus set forth by Prof. Charles:

“The rabbinic scholars taught that the prophets and Haggiographa would cease to be—for there is nothing in them that is not in the law. The law is to endure forever, and ‘*any prophet who attempted to annul one of its laws would be punished by death*’ (Toseph 14:12).” “From the time of Nehemiah onward prophecy could get no hearing.”<sup>1</sup>

Because of His forcible entrance into the temple precincts and His denunciation of the corrupt traffic in sacrificial animals and His prophetic determination to overthrow the whole priestly corrupt and exploiting institution, He came under the direct condemnation of the rabbinic law and incurred the death penalty. To be sure, as we have seen, this act was a practical assertion of His Messianic claim in a prophetic sense. But this was no offense in the eyes of the Roman law. To secure His condemnation at the hands of the Roman procurator and the infliction of the death penalty, He was accused of claiming to be the Messiah, in the political

<sup>1</sup>Charles, in the Introduction to the Second Volume of the “Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha,” p. vii.



sense as "pretender" to the throne of David. This claim was not an offense against the rabbinic law, but it was an act of rebellion against the Roman Empire. Pilate doubtless understood the fraudulent nature of the charges made by the priestly conspirators and sought to have Jesus released. But he yielded,—as an easy way of quelling the spirit of mob violence instigated by the priesthood. And so on the Cross the Prophet-Messiah became the Prophet-Martyr, the world's "Saving Victim," and the Cross was made the symbol of the warfare of the Kingdom of God.

## CHAPTER IX

THE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS SUBSTITUTE A MESSIANIC  
CULT FOR HIS BROTHERHOOD OF THE KINGDOM

THE great tragedy in the history of the prophetic religion has not been that the prophets were slain but that their messages fell upon deaf or unintelligent ears. The injury to Jesus by the death penalty at the hands of His enemies was less than the injury done to the Cause for which He lived and died by those who called themselves His followers but who failed to understand His theology or obey His ethics. The crucifixion through misunderstanding is more tragic than the crucifixion on the cross. The prophetic religion of Jesus, the aim of which embraced the elimination of all exploitation of mankind, in a few generation fell into the control of the sons and successors of the exploiters against whom He had made war, and, in a few centuries, an exploiting ecclesiasticism flourished in His Name and under the cloak of His authoritative sanction. It is in more modern times that the inconsistency between the lives of Christians and the Founder's teachings have been felt as a reproach. The substitutionary cult idea of a vicarious atonement and saving union with a redeeming God, had come to be regarded as exempting His followers from living up to the standards which He set. "Inconsistency" thereby became the normal and ac-

cepted characteristic of the Churchman, just as it had been that of the adherent of the Jewish sacrificial cult. The ideal of holiness became ceremonial, sacramental, or a matter of a purifying "faith" apart from works. To this result the influence of the writings of Paul largely contributed. The ancient sacrificial principle of the priestly code, which had been the principle attacked by all the prophets and Jesus Himself, was given the sanction of ecclesiastical authority when the sacraments were made the central feature of what had come to be a "soteriological" cult.

We have now to consider how this process was virtually accomplished within the life of the generation that produced the New Testament writings in their present form. Four movements will receive our attention: (1) The reversion of the Jerusalem Church to Apocalypticism and the loss of the prophetic ethic. (2) The Hellenistic "deacons," as the perpetuators of Jesus' prophetic doctrine. (3) Paulinism and its incomplete synthesis of opposing religious elements. (4) Ephesian Christianity which transformed the prophetic religion into a "Mystery Cult."

## I

The process of the surrender of the distinctive prophetic character of the religion of Jesus began when His earliest interpreters substituted their own teachings *about Jesus*, for Jesus' teachings about God and the Reign of God. In place of His

program they put one which He had condemned, namely, the Apocalyptic process of passive expectancy for a miracle to happen—(in His own expected appearance bringing the Kingdom of God to earth from the heavens). The process of bringing the free prophetic religion of Jesus under subjection to the Apocalyptic eschatology was chiefly the work of Simon Peter, the leader of the Twelve. The religion which Peter founded after the death of Jesus was a special Apocalyptic-Messianic cult which sought to live at peace within the Jewish national cult, against which Jesus had begun a campaign of eradication.

In the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, Simon Peter appears as the leader of the followers of Jesus in connection with the appointment of Matthias. "That a man who but a few weeks before had repeatedly and flagrantly denied his Master, should so soon recover the confidence of his associates, and even appear as their leader and spokesman, is, to say the least, surprising, and might well be doubted, were it not confirmed by the undisputed preëminence accorded to him on many other occasions throughout these early days."<sup>1</sup> The explanation of Peter's recovery probably lies in the fact that Peter (according to Paul, and the best critical opinion of to-day follows him) was the first to receive the message of the risen Lord. This fact (confirmed by the subsequent experience of others) seems to have given him his position of leadership

<sup>1</sup> McGiffert, "Apostolic Age," p. 47.

so that he became, in truth, the founder of the Church.<sup>1</sup> But the Church which was thus founded was not built upon the prophetic Messiahship of Jesus and His prophetic, aggressive program, but it was based upon the Messiahship of Jesus as a supernatural Figure of one Who had died and risen again and had been thereby "made Lord and Messiah" and given a seat on the throne of God which He was to occupy till He should return bringing the Kingdom with Him. In order to secure a favorable place in the coming of the Kingdom the Jews had only to repent (particularly of the sin of having crucified the Messiah) and be baptized in the Name of Jesus. With the reversion to the Apocalyptic eschatology the Apostles abandoned the prophetic ethic of Jesus and reverted to the ethic of the Jewish legalism and ceremonialism. This fact may be readily discerned from the following description of McGiffert:

Christianity, as they (the Apostles) understood it, was Judaism and nothing more. It was not a substitute for Judaism, nor even an addition or supplement to Judaism; it was not, indeed, in any way distinct from the national faith. It was simply the belief on the part of good and faithful Jews that Jesus was the Messiah, and it involved no disloyalty to Judaism, and no abandonment of existing principles. For a Jew to believe in the Messiah whom they preached, was not necessarily to revise his conception of the nature of the Messianic

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bacon's Monograph "Peter, the Founder of the Church," where this idea is fully developed.

Kingdom and of the blessings to be enjoyed within it, nor, indeed, of the conditions of sharing those blessings. Peter says only, "Repent and be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ" (Acts II: 38). Both here and in III: 19 where he again exhorts his hearers to repent, the sin that is apparently in his mind is their crucifixion of Jesus. . . .<sup>1</sup>

He did not put repentance in the place of righteousness, nor did he suggest any revision of the prevailing theory of righteousness, making it consist in something else than the observance of the Jewish law.<sup>2</sup>

Baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ was, of course, a new thing to the Jews whom he addressed; but baptism as such was entirely in line with the common Jewish rites of purification, and as a symbolical representation of cleansing from sins of which they repented, it must seem the most natural thing in the world to them. . . .<sup>3</sup>

A fuller reading of McGiffert only shows how complete was the reversion of the Apostles to Judaism and their abandonment of their Master's warfare against the Jewish cult. Peter (who had denied allegiance to the Person of the Jesus Who was under condemnation for His blasphemy against Judaism and Pharisaism)—later renounced the Master's Gospel, while proclaiming in His name a new Gospel of the Person of Jesus as the one who was to come as the futuristic Inaugurator of the kingdom of the Jews. The prophetic Universalism and moral warfare for God was completely abandoned, so that

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit. p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit. p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

both in precept and practice the Apostles went over to the adversaries of their Master—virtually crucifying His doctrine as the leaders of the Jewish cult had secured His physical crucifixion. They are left in security by the Sanhedrin and Pharisees join themselves to the followers of their late Adversary and Victim,<sup>1</sup> and have a voice in the affairs of His Church.

Thus the new Church unconsciously abandoned the Cause for which Jesus gave His life, and the Apostles lost the prophetic succession. In place of it arose by degrees the doctrine of the Apostolic Succession whereby the errors of Judaism were fastened upon the Church of Him Who sought to be their destroyer.

It is not difficult to understand how this surprising change came about without the slightest consciousness of disloyalty. In the lifetime of their Leader the Twelve were constantly showing that their pre-conceived ideas about the Kingdom were at variance with His. The Teacher was at great pains to show them wherein these inherited notions were wrong. They were so strongly under His personal influence that they dared violate provisions of the ceremonial law with His approval. But even to the time of His crucifixion they seemed to hold to the politico-eudemonistic conception of the Kingdom. This is borne out by their demoralization at the time of the crucifixion when the blow

<sup>1</sup> Acts 15: 5.

fell upon them. After that they were under the necessity of a reconstruction of their outlook. It was only natural that this reconstruction should embody a reversion to the main tenets of Judaism. Judaism was a racial cult—or a cult within a cult. The plan of salvation for the scribes and their disciples was adherence to the law—to secure personal survival and happiness—and also to hasten the day of the Kingdom. In Judaism the Personal Messiah had receded into the background. The Twelve now gave to the Personal Messiah the central position. It is He—the Risen crucified Servant of God—Who was to bring in the Kingdom when men should be prepared to receive Him. It was personal adherence to Him—plus the righteousness of the law,—that was to secure to those who adhered to Him—through baptism in His Name—a position of security and advantage in His Kingdom, so soon as it should come.

How completely the immediate followers of Jesus in the early days of the Jerusalem Church had failed to grasp the prophetic universalism of Jesus is unconsciously revealed by Luke in the book of Acts. This is illustrated in the story of the Roman centurion Cornelius who was a “proselyte of the gate.”<sup>1</sup> According to this account it required two visions and several seemingly miraculous coincidences to convince Peter of the call of the Gentiles, so that he could say “I see quite plainly that God has no favorites, but that He who reverences Him

<sup>1</sup> Acts 10.



and lives a good life in any nation is welcomed by him" (verse 35). It required no less than the evident descent of the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius and his Gentile associates to convince him that they should be baptized in the Name of Jesus (verse 48). News of this baptism of Gentiles reached Jerusalem before Peter's return so that when he came he was met by a rebuke. The author then goes on to tell that when Peter recited all the circumstances the Judaizers (or party of the circumcision) were convinced and even rejoiced, though their comment has a sound of amazed incredulity. "So God has actually allowed the Gentiles to repent and live."<sup>1</sup>

## II

But we may trace another channel through which the Gospel was preached to the Gentiles, reaching back to Jesus Himself. According to this, there were in the early Church at Jerusalem men of a more liberal and progressive type of religion than the Twelve, who seemed to have held the prophetic interpretation of religion. I refer to the Hellenists. These Greek-speaking Jewish Christians are mentioned in the 6th Chapter of Acts as among the increasing number of disciples. They appear to protest against the neglect of the widows in the distribution of food from the common store. It is an interesting conjecture that they may have been among those who listened to the preaching of Jesus Himself. This may be the explanation of the al-

<sup>1</sup> Chapter 11: 18, Moffat's version.

lusion to some "Greeks" who had come to worship at the Festival at Jerusalem and who sought through Philip to obtain an interview with Jesus.<sup>1</sup> The author refers to them as "Hellenes," but as they had come to worship at the temple it is far more likely that they were "Hellenists," that is, Grecian-born Jews rather than Greek proselytes. The author of the Fourth Gospel does not tell us whether these men ever succeeded in obtaining their request. But he may have been using a documentary source which he mutilated in transcribing.

The striking thing about these Hellenists is that they were concerned with the immediate needs of the unfortunate. In this they seem to have been in contrast with the Twelve who seemed to feel that the distribution of rations was beneath their dignity. The seven Hellenists who are appointed to that task accept it cheerfully. Thereby they seem to show a clearer appreciation of the meaning of the law of service; but in addition to this they also found opportunity to preach the Gospel, and their type of Gospel seems not to have been the Apocalyptic but the prophetic. In the speech attributed to Stephen in the Acts, the long introduction is probably a free composition by the author of the book. It is the usual patriotic rehearsal of Jewish history, but at the end there is a change of manner. The prophetic note is introduced. Perhaps the author is dealing with a special document, or his matter may have come from Philip—one of

<sup>1</sup> John 12: 20.

the seven whom Luke met at Cæsarea. A prophetic fragment occurs in Chapter 7, verse 42: "Did you offer me victims and sacrifices during the forty years in the desert, O house of Israel?" Another prophetic citation reëchoes the prophetic hostility against the temple. "And yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands. As the prophet says,

Heaven in my throne,  
the earth is a footstool for my feet!  
What house would you build me?  
saith the Lord.  
On what spot could I settle?  
Did not my hand make all this?"<sup>1</sup>

He next addresses his hearers in terms nearly akin to those employed by Jesus in His denunciation of the Pharisees. They and their fathers have always resisted the Spirit, persecuting the Spirit's messengers, the prophets. As the fathers have slain the prophets so the children of their slayers have murdered the Just One.

In the story of Philip, another of the "Seven," it may not be without significance that he is represented in his discourse with the Ethiopian eunuch as having interpreted the "Suffering Servant" of Isaiah as applied to the Messiahship of Jesus. This, as we have seen, was the sense in which Jesus understood His own Messiahship, and contrasts with the Apocalyptic Messiah of the Petrine discourses in

<sup>1</sup> Acts 7: 49; Moffat's version.

Acts. That there was a radical difference between the Gospel of the Twelve and the Gospel of the Hellenists, and that the former was reactionary and the latter true to the prophetic message of Jesus, is borne out by the fact recorded by Luke that a severe persecution broke out in Jerusalem against the adherents of Stephen (who was himself the first martyr), and resulted in their being scattered abroad whereas the Apostles were left unmolested by the authorities.

It was this Hellenistic or liberal Christianity which Philip preached among the Samaritans. Others carried their Gospel as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, as we are told in the 11th Chapter of Acts. At Antioch some of them designated as "Cypriotes" and "Cyrenians" began to preach the Gospel to the Greeks also.<sup>1</sup> It was at Antioch that the adherents of this movement were called "Christians." Hitherto they had been regarded as "Nazarenes" or a sect of Jews. It was to the Christian Church in Antioch that Paul (Saul) was brought by Barnabas and remained as a guest for a year. Here he was in the midst of liberalized Hellenistic Christians, and perhaps their influence upon his Gospel, in the trend toward universalism, was far greater than he himself, or the students of Paulinism, have realized. In the local Church at Antioch the religious leaders or ministers were known as "prophets and teachers." This may be also significant of their appreciation of the pro-

<sup>1</sup> See Moffat's version, footnote, p. 161.

phetic type of religion. It was from them that Paul and Barnabas received their commission to go forth, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom to Jew and Gentile alike. They thus became Apostles, literally, "men who are sent forth." Their commission was accompanied by prayer and the laying on of hands. This latter practice seems to have accompanied special acts of intercession as in the other practice of the laying on of hands upon the sick.<sup>1</sup> It appears to have been so incidental an occurrence in the mind of Paul that he nowhere refers to it in his extant writings. It was an old Jewish custom for the purpose of localizing prayer upon those for whom it was offered.

It has sometimes been said by admirers of Paul that had it not been for his universalism the movement inaugurated by Jesus would have remained a sect of Judaism with possibly a very brief history. An appreciation of the movement of Hellenistic Christianity as exhibited at Antioch will show that this claim on behalf of Paul is exaggerated.

### III

In contrast with the "Judaizing Christians"—which included James the brother of the Lord and the Twelve, Paul's Gospel is progressive and expansive. It contained elements antagonistic to the Jewish narrow particularism. Its influence has been enduring and has been on the side of the great reformatory movements in the Christian Church,

<sup>1</sup> Mk. 16: 18.

but all such movements, including the so-called Reformation itself, have stopped short of the prophetic Christian reform. At the present time the prophetic movement among Christian thinkers feels the need of going behind Paulinism to the doctrine of Jesus Himself. Compared with the Gospel of Jesus, as recovered by modern historical and critical methods, the Gospel of Paul is inadequate. It is impossible to regard him as the leader of the present forward movement of social Christianity.

The religious movement of the Judaizing Christians was that of a narrow cult, restricted to men of Jewish birth or proselytes, who in addition to the practice of Judaism accepted Jesus as the Messiah Who was to come. In contrast to this Paul's admission of the Gentiles to membership in the cult, his break with and rejection of legalism, and his claim to a call to service directly from God and independently of human mediators (the Apostles), makes him, by comparison, a man of "prophetic tendencies." But in contrast to the theology and ethical universalism of Jesus, he remains a conservative and a reactionary. It is as such that his influence is reckoned to-day among the true leaders of modern Christianity, those whose watchword is "Back to Christ." The chief indictment against him is that, in spite of his acceptance of the Gentiles, his religion remains that of a cult. His early rabbinism with its doctrine of predestination has a stronger determining influence upon his thought than has the prophetic literature of his race and the

prophetic career of his Master. He frankly lacks an appreciation of the historic Jesus as a Prophet and Teacher, and though emphasizing it less than the Twelve, he still gives his adherence to the Apocalyptic scheme of salvation. He abandons the prophetic Messianic conception of a universal, redeemed community co-extensive with mankind and living a normal life here upon the earth. In place of this his eschatology is burdened with "other-worldliness."

In place of the historic Jesus he gives his allegiance to the Man from Heaven Whom he seems to identify in his thought with the "Spirit." Salvation remains an object of quest for the individual in contrast to the injunction of Jesus to desist from seeking a separate individual salvation and in place of it to devote one's life to establishing the universal community of the saved. Within the cult he presents a beautiful ideal of loving social relationship. The members of the cult are members of each other because they are all members of the Body of Christ. His doctrine of the Church was broad in relation to Judaism and narrow in comparison with the prophetic universalism. In fact we may characterize Paul as the New Testament Ezekiel. His immediate success was due to the fact of his synthesizing elements derived from different contemporary movements, but this fact will also militate against the permanence of his movement, especially in the future.

Certain modern writers, among them especially

Percy Gardner (in his "Religious Experience of St. Paul") have pointed out the fact that St. Paul's religion was modeled on the pattern of the contemporary "Mystery Cults."

In the Græco-Roman world including the Near East at the beginning of our era there was a depressed and pessimistic outlook upon the destiny of mankind taken as whole. Humanity was seen as struggling against a threatening and adverse fate. This was the pessimistic ground-thought of the Apocalypses. Paul's view that all men rested under the curse inherited from the first ancestor of the race found its echo in the prevalent philosophy. Jesus' doctrine of the value of the individual man and of the Fatherhood of God and His belief in the nearness of the Kingdom was in marked contrast to the mood of mankind in His day. The Church accepted the current assumption that mankind was inevitably lost without some kind of miraculous intervention. The Church itself professed to hold the secret of deliverance. In this it found itself in harmony with the program of the Mystery Cults, many of which were its contemporaries.<sup>1</sup> The Mysteries have three notable characteristics:

First, all have some rites of purification, whether ceremonial or moral, through which the Mystæ have to pass. Second, They are all mysteries of communion with some deity, who through them comes into relation with his

<sup>1</sup> Among these Mysteries we may enumerate those of Tammuz, Attis, Isis, Mithras, Sandan, Sabazius, Cybele, Orpheus, and Demeter and Persephone.



votaries. Third, all extend their views beyond the present life to that which is to come, and secure for the initiated a happy reception in the world which lies beyond the grave.<sup>1</sup>

In the mysteries of Cybele the initiate enacts a ritualistic drama in which he symbolically shares the fate of Persephone in going to the under world after which he enjoys a symbolic return to life in a figurative resurrection to the life of the upper world. This is somewhat analogous to St. Paul's conception of baptism whereby the immersion in the water symbolizes burial with Christ and the emergence from the water the resurrection into a new life. The same idea is enacted on a larger scale in the sorrowing and fasting observance of Good Friday and the joyous Feast of Easter. The thought is expressed in the Collect for Easter Even.

Because the earlier Christians could point to the death and resurrection of Jesus as a recent well-attested historic fact, the thought of union with Him whether by faith or by the sacrament was most adaptable to the soteriological plan of the Mystery Cults, which promised to their adherents the privilege of reënacting in their own lives the experience of the Mystery god. Because it satisfied most adequately the felt longings of the men of the Roman Empire the Christian Church as a mystic society soon triumphed over all its rivals. But in thus constituting itself a mystery religion Christianity

<sup>1</sup> Percy Gardner, "The Religious Experience of St. Paul," p. 69.

was departing from the program of its Founder. In contrast to His preaching which laid but little emphasis upon His own Person and laid the most emphatic stress upon His teaching about the Kingdom, the Church laid but little emphasis upon His teaching and laid an almost exclusive stress upon His Person and Office as a redeeming God.

It is clear that Jesus in condemning the cult of the Pharisees and the temple cult condemned the underlying cult principle, and it is certain that He never intended to found a new cult with Himself as the center. In fact, He seems to warn against that as a danger.<sup>1</sup> In spite of this warning all His earlier followers, with the possible exception of a few Hellenists, ran into the very danger, and so the prediction of Jesus has already been fulfilled, "Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? Did we not cast out demons in your name? Did we not perform many miracles in your name?' " To whom His Spirit declares, "I never knew you; depart from my presence, you workers of iniquity." This testimony is confirmed by the testimony of three careful scholars, Professors Harnack, Lake and Hatch.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of his great services the influence of Paul, like that of Ezekiel, remains on the side of those who restrict religion to a community less than the total brotherhood of man. This restriction of the community to a cult is fatal, no matter how beauti-

<sup>1</sup> Mt. 7: 21-23.

<sup>2</sup> "With regard to the way in which He worked and gathered

ful the community life of the cult may be. Paul's conception of the Church leaves nothing to be desired in respect of the relation of its members to God and to each other. Josiah Royce in his "Problem of Christianity" has taken the Pauline conception and made it fundamental in his development of the idea of the "Beloved Community." Royce feels that in regard to this teaching Paul made a more important contribution to Christian thought than any that is found in the teachings of Jesus. Royce plainly never had a clear conception of the thought of the Founder of Christianity or he would have seen that in Jesus' preaching of the Reign of God every element that he admires in the Pauline idea of the Church is present and that besides, whereas Paul's "Church" remains restricted to the elect who are to be rescued out of the present world, Jesus regards the Community as universal, as all-inclusive, embracing the life in time as well as in eternity.

disciples, the distinctiveness of His Person and preaching comes out very clearly. He sought to found no sect or school. He laid down no outward rules for adhesion to Himself. His aim was to bring men to God and to prepare them for God's Kingdom." (Harnack, "Mission and Expansion of Christianity," vol. I, p. 37.)

"Jesus did not say that only those who followed Him would be admitted (to the Kingdom of God) and He did not deny the existence of righteous in Israel who needed no physician. The claim to have exclusive right of entry into the Kingdom of Heaven—the essence of ecclesiasticism in the bad sense of the word—was perhaps made by the scribes, or at least by some of them, but not by Jesus, though Christians have in this respect not

## IV

It is of the nature of the cult that it should be chiefly occupied with the person of the redeeming God and with the question of how saving relations with Him may be won and maintained. The development of the cult assures an absorption in Christological speculation. The loyal devotees of the cult-God will devote themselves to the extension of His claims to power and exaltation. The next step in the strengthening of the cult idea is found in the Fourth Gospel.

The Church at Ephesus produced this Gospel which is the Gospel of the cult *par excellence*. It is at once a mystic Gospel and a mystery religion. The portrait of Jesus, while employing historic materials, is composed on the superhistorical assumption that Jesus, the cult-God, existed from eternity, was the Agent of God in creation, the Source of all light and enlightenment, and that

always followed His example." (Lake, "Stewardship of Faith," p. 33.)

"He never asked His disciples to trust in Himself rather than in God; nor did He demand of them faith in His Own Person, though He felt He had been divinely appointed to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom of God and to prepare men for it. He fully believed that He was the Messiah but He did not make forgiveness or salvation dependent upon belief in His Messiahship. It was enough for Him if He could persuade men to repent of their sins, to bring forth the fruits of righteousness, and to live in trust toward their Heavenly Father, looking forward expectantly to the coming of the Kingdom." (W. H. P. Hatch, "The Pauline Idea of Faith," pp. 24-25, cf. also, p. 22.)

He came into the world in order that those who had the insight to accept Him might receive from Him the right of being children of God. This conception is based on the theology which falls short of the universalism of Jesus, and it places an interpretation upon His Mission and Person which He Himself would not have recognized.

In thus turning the stream of Christianity into the channels of a mystery cult, Paul and the author or authors of the Ephesian Gospel were quite unconsciously taking the first step in the development which soon transformed the free emancipating universalistic Gospel of God and humanity into an exploiting ecclesiasticism, the most stupendous in the history of the world, the corrupting influence of which survives to the present time.

## CHAPTER X

### THE CULT BECOMES AN EXPLOITING ECCLESIASTICISM

HITHERTO we have been discussing the theological ideas which led the followers of Jesus to regard themselves as a cult. We are now to consider the manner in which the cult became organized externally. The Church in Jerusalem under the leadership of the Apostles adopted a form of communism. It was not a communism of productive co-operation but a communism of "consumption." The adherents converted their land and capital into ready cash which was used to buy provisions for all the members of the community. The Parousia was believed to be so near that the Lord's appearance was counted on before the common store should have been entirely used. As we have already seen the distribution was at first badly organized so that weaker members of the community suffered. It was to remedy this abuse that the "Seven" were appointed a committee to have the matter in charge.

The Seven were soon scattered by persecution. As might be expected, the community was soon reduced to poverty owing to its miscalculations. When Paul visited the Church in Jerusalem in order to win its approval of his mission to the Gentiles, the Apostles, in giving him the right hand of fellowship, asked him to confine his ministrations to the

Gentiles, and added a request that he should "remember the poor," that is to say, that he should send contributions to the impoverished Church in Jerusalem. This request he diligently observed. At this time the Apostles did not compel Titus, a Greek who accompanied Paul, to submit to circumcision. But the Judaizers did not abide by what Paul considered their agreement to a division of the field. Hence his indignation when he discovered that the Jerusalem Church was sending out emissaries who were attempting to make Jewish proselytes of his Gentile converts. The Judaizers evidently did not consider the Pauline Christians as possessing a "regular" standing. How did Paul regard the Judaizers? He rejected their claims to authority to impose their standards upon his adherents. But he still regarded them as members of the Christian community, of the "Body of Christ," and therefore he sought to discharge toward them the duties of brotherly assistance and to win their recognition and hold it. These two motives united in imparting diligence to his campaign for raising what must have been a large offering which he took to them in person. His Epistles contain several allusions to this contribution.

In sending out the Twelve Jesus had restricted them to the acceptance of hospitality, had warned them against accepting money. But now, instead of seeking to be self-supporting, the Apostles became dependent upon the contributions of the Church at large, especially upon the generosity of

the Gentile Churches. In writing to the Corinthians Paul suggests that they adopt the arrangement which he has already made for the Churches at Galatia. They are to take a weekly offering from every one of the members of the community. When the sum has become sufficiently large a committee with proper credentials is to take the sum to Jerusalem, and he suggests that if it is large enough he himself will accompany them.<sup>1</sup> In his letter to the Romans he tells them that he is about to leave for Jerusalem on an errand to the "saints," which is to carry the contribution from the Churches in Macedonia and Achaia. He represents these offerings as a debt which the Gentiles owe to the Jewish Church because of the spiritual benefit which that Church has mediated to them. It would now seem as though the Jerusalem Church were perilously near exploiting the Gospel, although the contributions were not levied but were wholly voluntary. At any rate, we have the beginnings of a clerical caste subsisting on the offerings of the laity who work for their living.

## I

In the Gentile Churches the ministers of the congregation were at first self-supporting. Paul accepted the hospitality of the Churches, among whom he made a short stay, but in Ephesus where he stayed for two years, he supported himself by working at his trade of tent-making and earned enough

<sup>1</sup> I Cor. 16: 1-4.



to assist his fellow ministers.<sup>1</sup> In the organization of the Gentile Churches the ministry was not paid.—all of the offerings were taken for the poor of the local congregation and the share which was sent to Jerusalem. The organization of the ministry was “charismatic,” that is to say, those who ministered to the local churches or to the Church at large received their appointment by reason of recognized qualifications derived by charismatic gifts communicated by the Spirit. Paul enumerates these charismatic officers as first “Apostles,” that is, those who were sent out as missionaries; secondly, “Prophets,” these seem to have been local ministers in Antioch but they also belonged to the “itinerant ministry”; thirdly, “Teachers,” of whom the same may be said. In addition to these, there were the following local ministers: “Healers,” “Helpers,” “Administrators,” and “Speakers in tongues.”<sup>2</sup>

The “administrators” were those who in the pastoral Epistles are designated as “Bishops,” that is, “overseers,” and the “helpers,” those who are called “deacons,” that is “servants,” who assisted the Bishops in the distribution of the offerings to the poor. In the pastoral Epistles, which were probably written near the end of the first century, special stress is laid upon the importance of the character of these men who had the handling of the funds of the community. They must not be polygamists,

<sup>1</sup> Acts 20: 34.

<sup>2</sup> I Cor. 12: 28.

or excessive drinkers, or avaricious, or "pilferers."<sup>1</sup> In the *Didaché* or "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," which is perhaps not more than a decade later in date than the pastoral Epistles, we have a picture of the existing simple order of the Church. The itinerant ministry is given the first position of honor, but many restrictions are placed upon those who might enter the community claiming to be Apostles and Prophets. The bishop is appointed by the congregation and in addition to administering the poor fund he also presides at the Eucharist in the absence of one of the itinerant ministers. He is, however, restricted to the use of simple liturgical prayers, whereas the prophet is allowed to "pray as much as he will."

It is apparent that many impostors and exploiters must have foisted themselves upon unsuspecting local churches, because of the minute instructions given whereby the true may be distinguished from the false. The visiting Apostle, till proved guilty, is to be received "as the Lord," but if he stays and attempts to live on the community longer than two days his claims are fraudulent, he is a "false prophet." He is an exploiter if he asks for money or "orders a meal." In any case, when he leaves he is not to take anything with him beyond sufficient bread to last until he reaches the next local church. This provision sees to it that the itinerant minister carries out the instructions which Jesus gave the Twelve in sending them out on their preaching

<sup>1</sup> I Tim. 3; Titus, 1.

mission. In Chapter 13, however, seemingly later provisions are introduced. They seem to have been incorporated in the interests of the prophetic ministry. In them it is provided that the prophets and teachers may settle permanently in the community. Their support is also liberally provided for and so the way is paved for the rise of a caste of professional ministers depending upon the offerings of the congregation hitherto intended for the use of the poor. "Every first fruit, then, of the products of the wine press and threshing floor, of oxen and sheep, thou shalt take and give to the prophet, *for they are your High Priests.*" "If thou makest a baking of bread, take the first of it and give according to the commandment. In like manner when thou openest a jar of wine or oil, take the first of it and give to the prophet; and of money and clothing and every possession, take the first, as seems right to thee, and give according to the commandment." The "prophets" evidently expect to live well. Their claims are put before those of the poor, as is implied by the statement "But if ye have no prophets, give it to the poor." It was perhaps owing to a deterioration in the character of the itinerant ministry and the restrictions which were placed upon its members in consequence, that the disappearance of the itinerant ministry claiming charismatic or prophetic gifts became inevitable, and the ascendancy of a local administrative organization, consisting of teachers, shepherds, bishops and deacons, became officially established.

The "elders" do not appear as a clerical caste till the next period of development. This title, as Sohm and Lowrie have pointed out, was a title of age rather than of office. In the Jewish Church, however, the older men of exemplary character were recognized as holding positions of judicial, or at least of advisory weight. Their importance is recognized in frequent Old Testament references.<sup>1</sup> It is doubtless true that the bishops were selected from their number.

## II

In the next period of development the "oligarchical" or many-headed voluntary group of elders or bishops, which was self-supporting and which gave its services freely, became a local hierarchy of three steps with a single local bishop at the head. An element which contributed to the strength and rigidity of the official organization grew out of the felt need to deal with the divisive and schismatic tendencies which arose from the freedom of the charismatic organization permitting as it did the rise within the group of "heresies"—the literal meaning of which is "differences of opinion."

The seriousness of these differences of opinion was that they led to divisions and hostilities within the community, and the method taken to combat them was not that of friendly discussion and reciprocal education, but the less Christlike method of mutual recrimination and finally of judicial con-

<sup>1</sup> e. g. in Lev. 4: 15; Deut. 29: 10; 31: 28; 32: 7; I Sam. 30: 26.

demnation of views not acceptable to the ascendant parties who were able to impose penalties, the chief of which was excommunication. We know of St. Paul's conflict with the Judaizers. Many of these rejected his claim to the Apostleship. Paul sought to safeguard against their disturbing influence by warning his churches, as in his address to the presbyters at Ephesus,<sup>1</sup> that "grievous wolves would get in among them and not spare the flock." The Jewish Christians perpetuated their controversy against Paulinism in the so-called "Clementine Homilies" which plainly reject Paul's claims to Apostleship and take him to task for his criticisms of Peter in his Epistle to the Galatians. The Jewish Church was ultimately excommunicated by the Gentile Catholic Church. It continued its existence under the Patriarch of Jerusalem till the fourth century. It perpetuated the Apocalyptic conception of Jesus as the *Christus futurus*. They rejected all the later Christologies, so that in time its conservatism placed it in the class of heretics from the point of view of the later established orthodoxy.

In his advocacy of a rigid organization of the local church under a monarchical episcopate, Ignatius, who was the religious enthusiast of this change, had in mind efficiency of management, especially in dealing with the schismatics. The final test of the permanence of this organization was made in the conflict with Montanism. Montanism was a Gentile revival of the early Apocalyptic expectation of

<sup>1</sup> Acts 20: 17 ff.

the imminent coming of Christ upon the clouds. The Church had by its organization begun to provide for its future continuance on earth as a permanent institution. Its adherents had regard for its material interests and for extending its influence. To the Montanists all this seemed futile in view of the destruction of the existing world order which they so soon expected. They condemned the "worldliness" of the growing cult and rejected its official ministry, claiming to possess a charismatic ministry and prophetic succession of their own. With their downfall the organization of the Catholic Church was assured on a permanent basis. The significance of this fact, it was the service of Ritschl to have pointed out.

### III

From the time of Ignatius on we find marks of a growing "clerical consciousness." Ignatius himself the bishop of Antioch is not restrained by any false modesty in exalting the position of the bishop of the local church to one of equivalence to the office of Christ, as a vicar of God. The presbyters he regards as the successors of the Apostles. To the church at Smyrna he writes: "See that ye follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the presbytery as ye would the Apostles, and reverence the deacons as being the institution of God."<sup>1</sup> Here we have a clear-cut class

<sup>1</sup>Ad. Smyr. C. VIII and XII—Quoted by Dr. Allen, "Christian Institutions," p. 62.

consciousness, not merely of the distinction between the clerical and the lay, but also of the class division within the clerical order into higher and inferior clergy. All this seems to indicate the influence of the Roman bureaucracy and complicated class division.

The idea was emphasized by the Church architecture and in the forms of worship. There was the bishop's throne; the officiating presbyter stood on the top step of the Altar, and the deacons on the step below. Each order had its especial vestments, their splendor corresponding to the rank of the privileged wearer.

By this time the clergy received an income, partly in kind (a portion of that which had formerly been given to the poor), and also presents in money. The church life had become so elaborated that all the time of the clergy was required and no opportunity left them to support themselves as had been the custom of the earlier time. In fact, it was now considered beneath the dignity of the ministry to earn their own livings by productive labor. That which St. Paul had commended in himself, namely, his self-support, by his own hands, is now considered reprehensible. "Worldly callings" were condemned as incompatible with the highest devotion to the service of God in the church. The growing influence of the clergy offered multiplied opportunities for exploitation which logically enough developed a tendency toward corruption.

#### IV

As the cult grew in influence and importance and as the clerical body increased its influence, it offered such opportunities for a brilliant career that men of ability and ambition were tempted to enter the field. These men by their gifts of organization were able to still further strengthen the power and prestige of the Church and its ruling orders. In selecting their bishops it became a principle to choose "a man of weight in the community," so that men of wealth and members of the nobility came to have a prior claim upon the episcopal office. The local bishop became elevated to preside over the diocese.

Episcopal prestige owes a permanent debt to Cyprian. Before becoming a bishop himself Cyprian had been a successful Roman lawyer. He was a member of the upper class and a man of wealth either by inheritance or as the result of a successful legal practice. It may be said without exaggeration that Cyprian accomplished more toward the separation of the church from the mind and program of Jesus than any of his predecessors, for he was a most efficient agent in binding the Body of Christ by the fetters of a rigid ecclesiasticism and handing it over to that very hierarchical system which the prophets and Jesus had given their lives to combat. Yet he was not conscious of any inconsistency or disloyalty, for he was only conscious of loyal adherence to the Christian cult. That cult had already grown so far away from the basic



principles of Christ that it was possible to be a good Catholic and a false Christian (i.e. not a "Christian" used in the sense of a true adherent of the doctrine of Jesus), without being conscious of the inconsistency.

It was perhaps natural that Cyprian should fail to recognize that Jesus had utterly condemned the Jewish hierarchy, but he not only failed to do that, he affirmed the opposite. He assumed such an original harmony between Christ and the Jewish priesthood that he held Him to be its Founder. He calls the Jewish priests "our predecessors." In fact, he takes over the whole conception of the Jewish hierarchy as developed in the Old Testament, even in its extreme late form, which was at the opposite pole from prophetism, as the prototype of the organization of the Christian Church. He thus places the Christian Church squarely in the range of the missiles of wrath which the prophets and especially Jesus had hurled at the exclusive monopolistic and exploiting temple cult. Cyprian's method was that which had become commonly employed by church leaders after the third century. "As the churches became stocked with every kind of sacred ceremony, and as they carefully developed priestly, sacrificial and sacramental ideas, people began to grow reckless in applying the letter of the Old Testament ceremonial laws to the arrangements of the Christian organization and worship. In setting itself up as a legalistic body, the Church had recourse to the Old Testament in a way

that Paul had severely censured; it fell back on the law though all the while it blamed the Jews and declared that their observance of the law was quite illicit. In the practice of the church, . . . people employed the Old Testament, in order to get a basis for usages which they considered indispensable. For a purpose of this kind the New Testament was of little use."<sup>1</sup>

Cyprian was indeed the most serious offender. By temperament and training a legalist he identified Christianity with the legalism of the "priestly code"—a sacerdotal forgery made by an exploiting hierarchy to further its own interests by means of the falsification of history. Cyprian finds the priestly myth of Korah, Dathan and Abiram as useful in illustrating God's indignation against those who rejected the bishops. From this the character of his theology as that of the priestly type and as foreign to the theology of Jesus, may be clearly inferred. He says distinctly that the Christian bishop is the inheritor of the Jewish High Priesthood! Each diocese is "the congregation of Israel." "The election of a bishop in the presence of the representatives of the diocese is made in accordance with the law of Moses." The bishop inherits the old hierarchical judicial authority. Nay more, the bishop is judge in Christ's stead. Contempt of the bishop's government is condemned in the law and in the books of Samuel. Even though the

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, "Mission and Expansion of Christianity," vol. I, p. 287.

same faith and worship are maintained as that of the bishop, yet one who invades his office is guilty of the veritable sin of Korah. The laws about the High Priest were ultimately intended to apply to the bishops and since the failure of the Jewish hierarchy apply to them alone. Cyprian goes so far as to claim the authority both of St. Paul and of our Lord Himself for this view.<sup>1</sup>

Cyprian finds in the presbytery a continuation of the Levitic tribe (the inferior clergy), "living on the offerings of the people, as their predecessors on the tithes, devoted day and night to sacrifice and prayer."<sup>2</sup>

In Cyprian, quite unconsciously to him and to his contemporaries, the Apostasy of the Catholic Church from the theology of Jesus and from the social doctrine of the Kingdom with its democratic implications derived from the doctrine of the infinite worth of the common man, reaches its official completion. The Church of Christ is now organized and ready to be handed over to the enemies of Christ, the exploiters of their brethren.

The influence of the bishops was naturally the greatest at the great centers. The preëminence of the Bishop of Rome was made possible by the opportunities offered by the imperial city. It was an office to be coveted by the ambitious. The bishops and deacons of Rome handled large sums of money without any control of the finances by the govern-

<sup>1</sup> See Archbishop Benson, "Cyprian," p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Benson, *Loc. cit.*

ment or by the church itself. As might have been expected there were many defalcations in consequence.

## V

If the main thesis of this book has been established, that the religion of Jesus was the full realization of the religion of the insurgent prophecy, if His religion was the militant foe of exploiting priestly rule as well as the partisan of all the exploited and oppressed, then we are forced to the startling conclusion that even before the days of Constantine the Christian Church had strangled and suppressed the Gospel of its Founder. Had the Spirit of Jesus as revealed in His teachings been indeed the guiding influence of the Church, it could never have exploited in its own interests or made an alliance with an Empire founded upon the practice of exploitation as the very life-blood of its existence. But the Church as legalized according to the type of the Jewish theocracy, under the personal rule of monarchic bishops, archbishops, and ultimately of popes, was admirably adapted to exploit on its own account and enter into an alliance of exploitation with the imperial power. "These were the Christians whom Constantine declared to be the support of his throne—people who clung to the bishops with submissive faith and who would not resist their divinely appointed authority! The Christianity that triumphed was the Christianity of a blind faith, which Celsus had depicted.

When would a state ever have shown any practical interest in any other kind of religion?"<sup>1</sup>

The triumph of Christianity in the guise of the established church of the empire was at the same time the defeat of all that Jesus Christ stood for in religion. Under Constantine the Church reached the climax of Christological elevation in exalting its Founder to the rank of equality with the Eternal God, but in so doing it banished Him and the Cause of the Kingdom from the earth making Him transcendent and remote from the world which He had come to save. At one stroke the Church deified its Lord and disobeyed Him. In one voice it declared Him by conciliar authority to be "Very God of Very God" and while offering its adoration betrayed Him into the hands of High Priests and rulers who crucified His doctrine upon a jeweled cross surmounted by the imperial crown.

## VI

From the time of the alliance between the church and the Prince of the Gentiles shameless exploitation strode forward with splendid mien. The bishops used the loyalty of their submissive people to direct a similar loyalty to the *parvenu* Emperor. In return for their (im)moral support the bishops and the other clergy and the congregations committed to their charge received most generous financial, legal and social recognition. The clergy and the Church property were exempted from taxation—a

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, op. cit. vol. I, p. 223.

great privilege (and a great mistake for us moderns to have repeated). The rich endowments of the pagan shrines were confiscated and given to the Church. The temples of the pagan gods were given over to the Church as places of worship, though the nature of that worship continued fundamentally more pagan than Christian. The Church received generous donations from the Emperor himself and from private individuals. It became a large holder of real estate and was given the right to receive bequests. Its land and its capital continued to accumulate. The clergy also enjoyed judicial powers. The more important bishoprics were the equals or superiors of the governorships of Roman Provinces in worldly power.

The incomes of the clergy were placed upon a permanently profitable basis. The Church had become the mouthpiece of the Empire to bid men to implicit obedience and the State responded by filling the mouth with all kinds of delectable nourishment.

Not only were special privileges granted to Churchmen but natural rights were withdrawn from those who did not give their allegiance to the Christian religion. Moreover, those who did not loyally give their adherence to the doctrines established in the councils were treated in this regard the same as the pagans. One who accepted the conciliary resolutions received from the Emperor immunity and privileges. One who did not was liable to confiscation, banishment and death. The Church had become wholly paganized. Its real

object of worship was not Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth or the Father Whom He revealed, but Mammon, the god of this world. "It held to the one and despised the other." Instead of the leaven of the Kingdom leavening the world, the leaven of mammon was to leaven the whole ecclesiastical lump. Successful mammon worship came to be recognized as a form of piety, as the following quotation from Dr. Allen's "Christian Institutions" brings forth with gentle humor:

The bishops became rich in lands and estates through the gifts that were heaped upon them by grateful sovereigns or by the piety of individuals, of whose wealth they seemed the most appropriate heirs. Just as the piety of the time took shape in the donations of every kind of property, so the piety of the bishop was shown in the faithful administration of property by which it continued to increase. Secular lords might prove extravagant and reckless with no sense of the value of their estates; but the model bishop held his property as a divine possession, not to be alienated but multiplied as talents entrusted to him which it was his duty to increase many fold.<sup>1</sup>

It is to be feared that much of this same kind of piety survives in our modern parish institutions. It has been the prevailing heresy of the Christian ages that God wishes to be worshipped by means of *things* instead of by the establishing of the Beloved Community which shall extend the principles of divine life and love to all the children of God.

<sup>1</sup> Op cit. p. 205.

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER X

The process by which the Church became legalized, i. e., Romanized, will be indicated by the following extracts from the chapter on Roman and Canon Law in Henry Osborn Taylor's "Mediaeval Mind," vol. II, p. 265:

The Church, from the time of its first recognition by the Roman Empire, lived under the Roman law; and the constitutions safeguarding its authority were large and ample before the Empire fell. Constantine, to be sure, never dreamed of the famous "Donation of Constantine" forged by a later time, yet his enactments fairly launched the great mediæval Catholic Church upon the career which was to bring it more domination than was granted in this pseudo-charter of its power. A number of Constantine's enactments were preserved by the Theodosian Code, in which the powers and privileges of Church and clergy were portentously set forth.

The Theodosian Code freed the property of the Church from most fiscal burdens, and the clergy from taxes, from public and military service, and from many other obligations which sometimes the Code groups under the head of *sordida munera*. The Church might receive all manner of bequests, and it inherited the property of such of its clergy as did not leave near relatives surviving them. Its property generally was inalienable; and the clergy were accorded many special safeguards. Slaves might be manumitted in a church. The church edifices were declared asylums of refuge from pursuers, a priv-



ilege which had passed to the churches from the heathen fanes and the statues of the emperors. Constitution after constitution was hurled against the Church's enemies. The Theodosian Code has one chapter containing sixty-six constitutions directed against heretics, the combined result of which was to deprive them, if not of life and property, at least of protected legal existence.

Of enormous import was the sweeping recognition on the Empire's part of the validity of episcopal jurisdiction. No bishop might be summoned before a secular court as a defendant, or compelled to give testimony. Falsely to accuse one of the clergy rendered the accuser infamous. All matters pertaining to religion and church discipline might be brought only before the bishop's court, which likewise had plenary jurisdiction over controversies among the clergy. It was also open to the laity for the settlement of civil disputes. The command not to go to law before the heathen came down from Paul (I Cor. vi), and together with the severed and persecuted condition of the early Christian communities, may be regarded as the far source of the episcopal jurisdiction, which thus divinely sanctioned *tended to extend its arbitrament to all manner of legal controversies*. To be sure, under the Christian Roman Empire, the authority of the Church as well as its privileges rested upon imperial law. Yet the emperors recognized, rather than actually created, the ecclesiastical authority. And when the Empire was shattered, there stood the Church erect amid the downfall of the imperial government, and capable of supporting itself in the new Teutonic kingdoms.

. . . . .

The Church arose within the Roman Empire, and who shall say that its wonderfully efficient and complete or-

ganization at the close of the patristic period was not the final creation of the legal and constructive genius of Rome, newly inspired by the spirit of Christianity?

. . . . .

The canon law is a vast sea. Its growth, its age-long agglomerate accretion, the systematization of its huge contents, have long been subjects for controversialists and scholars. Its sources were as multifarious as those of the Roman law. First the Scriptures and the early quasi-apostolic and pseudo-apostolic writings; then the traditions of primitive Christianity and also the writings of the Fathers; likewise ecclesiastical customs, long accepted and legitimate, and finally the two great written sources, the decretals or decisions of the popes and the decrees of councils. From patristic times collections were made of the last. These collections from a chronological gradually acquired a topical and more systemic arrangement, which the compilers followed more completely after the opening of the tenth century. The decisions of the popes also had been collected, and then were joined to conciliar compilations and arranged after the same topical plan.

In all of them there was unauthentic matter, accepted as if its pseudo-authorship or pseudo-source were genuine. But in the stormy times of the ninth century following the death of Charlemagne, the method of argument through forged authority was exceptionally creative. It produced two masterpieces which won universal acceptance. The first was a collection of false Capitularies ascribed to Charlemagne and Louis the Pious, and ostensibly the work of a certain Benedictus Levita, deacon of the Church of Mainz, who worked in the middle of the century. Far more famous and important was

the book of *False Decretals*, put together and largely written, that is forged, about the same time, probably in the diocese of Rheims, and appearing as the work of Saint Isidore of Seville. This contained many forged letters of the early popes and other forged matter, including the Epistle or "Donation" of Constantine; also genuine papal letters and conciliar decrees. These false collections were accepted by councils and popes, and formed part of subsequent compilations.

## CHAPTER XI

### SOME CHRISTIAN INSURGENT PROPHETS

HAVING traced the history of the Catholic Church to the point where exploitation had come to be recognized as a form of piety it would be necessary practically to rehearse the history of the entire mediæval church in order to show how the principle was worked out and extended. In the East the patriarchates grew to the dimensions of kingdoms. In the West the papacy became virtually a theocratic empire. Its dominion was not only extended over the national churches, all of which were made to pay tribute greatly in excess of the revenues of their respective kingdoms, but it exercised an over-lordship over kingly courts, and so long as its anathemas and fears were held in superstitious regard it could bend recalcitrant kings and emperors to its sovereign will.

But powerful as the church was both ecclesiastically and politically it could not absolutely stifle the voices of a new race of insurgent prophets which from time to time arose to denounce its exploitations and to preach a return to the simplicity of the social Gospel of Christ. We can do little more than call the roll of a few more honored names.

#### I

In Arnold of Brescia, born in 1100, we find a real prophet with a program for Christianizing the polit-

ical and social order. Resisting all temptations to indulge in exploitation he lived in Evangelical poverty. Walter Mapes, the English traveler, records his impression of him in the following words: "In religion, a leader of leaders, allowing himself neither food nor clothing beyond what the strictest necessity compelled, he went about preaching, seeking nothing for himself but all for God, and became loved and admired by all."<sup>1</sup> Mapes, however, should have excepted from the number of those who loved and admired him the exploiting ecclesiastics and secular rulers. His denunciations of the wealth and self-indulgence of the clergy richly earned their dislike, but it was his political teachings that were taken as the ground for his persecution. On scriptural grounds he maintained that the pope should not exercise political rule. Rome should properly come under the government of an Emperor who should receive his office not by right of succession but through a popular election. Arnold was the foe at once of ecclesiastical and political autocracy.

The citizens of Rome for a time accepted his doctrine and made him the head of a *de facto* republic which for ten years succeeded in compelling the Pope to relinquish his temporal power. At the end of this ten year period the Pope and the Emperor made common cause against him. The soldiers of Barbarossa succeeded in capturing the prophet and handed him over to the "Vicar of God" who caused him to be hanged and burned, after which his ashes

<sup>1</sup> De Nugis Curial. Dist. I, 24.

were desecrated by being cast into the Tiber. Thus the prophetic messenger was found worthy to meet the prophet's fate.

## II

Francis of Assisi was a Churchman of a far gentler type, who, though he was sparing of denunciation, was nevertheless keenly aware of evils and abuses and in his own way gave his life to remedying them. He, therefore, deserves a place among the prophets. What others had attempted to do by agitation or political revolt, Francis undertook to accomplish by means of an organized social movement within the Church. It was an attempt to found a religious order the rule of which should be true to the Sermon on the Mount. It was an attempt to unite a body of earnest men, committed to Evangelical poverty, who should adopt as the central principle of their conduct Jesus' law of service. He wrote to the Superiors of the Order, " 'I did not come to be ministered unto but to minister,' says the Lord. Let those who are set above others glory in their superiority only as much as if they had been deputed to wash the feet of the brothers."<sup>1</sup>

The vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, were supposedly taken by all the mediæval religious orders, but this did not prevent them from attaining great corporate wealth. They became one of the great organs of ecclesiastical exploitation.

<sup>1</sup> "Writings of St. Francis of Assisi," edited by Father Pascal Robinson, Philadelphia, 1906, p. 9.

The popular antagonism to them in a later period was based upon their great wealth and their means of getting it.

Francis gave great thought and attention to prevent any possible kind of exploitation by the members of his community whether as individuals or collectively. They were not to beg alms except when the opportunity to earn the necessities of life was denied them, and then they were forbidden to accept money. They sought to go back to the time when the preachers of religion earned their own living while preaching the Gospel—to the time when Jesus was a carpenter, the Apostles were fishermen, when St. Paul was a tent-maker. They were not even to accept money as wages in return for actual labor, but only food and shelter. They were not permitted to engage in all kinds of labor but only such as were productive. "Let the brothers, in whatever places they may be among others to serve or to work, not be chamberlains, nor cellarers, nor over-seers, in the houses of those whom they serve, and let them not accept any employment which might cause scandal, or be injurious to their soul, but let them be inferior and subject to all who are in the same house. And let the brothers, . . . labor and exercise themselves in that art they may understand. . . . For the prophet says: 'For thou shalt eat the labors of thine hands, blessed art thou, and it shall be well with thee;' and the Apostle: 'If any man will not work neither let him eat;' and let every man abide in the art or employ-

ment wherein he was called. And for their labor they may receive all necessary things, except money. . . . And they may have the tools and implements necessary for their work. . . ."<sup>1</sup> These rules were intended for the members of the first order, the friars proper, but the program of Francis embraced a third order intended to include men and women of the laity in their daily lives. This plan entitles him to be ranked as a great social reformer.

The four rules of the "tertiaries" were, (1) that members should not carry offensive weapons; (2) nor take solemn oaths; (3) they were required to contribute monthly dues to a common fund; and (4) to make their wills within three months after their admission to the order.<sup>2</sup>

These seemingly simple rules contemplated nothing less than the complete overthrow of the exploiting feudal system. The second provision practically absolved the members of the order from oaths of allegiance to the feudal lords by which the latter held the right to enforce their vassals into their personal quarrels. The third rule contemplated the accumulation of a fund which would enable the serfs to aid each other in adversity and ultimately to purchase their liberty. The object of the fourth rule was to prevent the feudal abuse under which the liege lord claimed the property of all the serfs who died intestate. Honorius III and

<sup>1</sup> Rule I, sections 8 and 9, Ed. cited pp. 41-44.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Leo L. Dubois, "St. Francis of Assisi, Social Reformer," p. 52.



Gregory IX supported the tertiaries in their rights to adhere to this rule when it was contested by the feudal lords. It therefore accomplished what was intended by Francis. In recognition of his services to the common people, Sabatier has called him "The Father of Italian Democracy" and Cristofani has called him "The Patriarch of the Religion of Democracy."

It thus appears that Francis possessed a marked capacity which has not been generally credited to him, that of a gifted politician. This he used not after the manner of most men with this endowment for purposes of self-aggrandizement through exploitation but he used his talent with the object in view of combating exploitation. But in this his gift was no match for that of the past-master exploiting politicians of Rome. After his death they succeeded in subordinating his ideals and methods so that even his own order finally became an arm of the exploiting papal political machine.

### III

Another Italian of still different mould has claims to be ranked in the list of Christian insurgent prophets, Dante. The *Divine Comedy* of this poet is full of prophetic wrath against the abuses of his time and he literally places exploiting Popes, simoniacs, and ecclesiastical grafters in hell. His program for reform contemplated the reduction of those powers of the Church which it used for purposes of exploitation by the power of an ideal emperor.

The *de Monarchia* of Dante contains the picture of a universal community with a kind of Messianic monarch at its head. His ruler is a "monarch who loves men greatly . . . He desires all men to do good." (Chapter 12.) It has been said that the *de Monarchia* of Dante was an epitaph rather than a prophecy. He had, however, an ideal which had striking Messianic affinities as is brought out by the following quotation from Joseph Mazzini, "The ideas of which I have here given a sketch (the Titanic dream of an Italy, the leader of humanity and angel of light among the nations) are fermenting, more or less boldly developed, among the youth of Italy. Understanding Dante better than those who write about him, they revere him as the prophet of the nation, and as the one who gave to Italy not only the scepter of modern poetry but the initiative thought of a new philosophy."<sup>1</sup> Dinsmore says of him "like the stern Hebrew prophet whom he so much resembles this Tuscan seer was an ardent patriot. He never divorced his religion from his politics, but brought both under the same august moral order."<sup>2</sup>

Another fellow countryman of Dante, Marsiglio of Padua, the joint author with John of Jandun of the *Defensor Pacis*, deserves a place on the prophetic roll of honor. It is of special interest for us to-day that he advocated political democracy and

<sup>1</sup> Essay on Dante.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Allen Dinsmore, "The Teachings of Dante," 1901, p. 57.

the greatest possible freedom of opinion in theological and ecclesiastical matters. He advocated the principle that "heretics" are to be left to the judgment of Christ; errors in opinion are not subject to human judgment.<sup>1</sup>

#### IV

Turning now to England we find in the writings of William Langland, a peasant priest, a complete draft of the prophetic interpretation of Christianity and of the doctrines of the Kingdom of God, in his "The Vision of William, Concerning Piers the Ploughman." The corruption and exploitation on the part of ecclesiastics, the secular nobility and the monarchy are dealt with in a most trenchant manner. Christianity is made to consist in the law of love. Deliverance from evils is sought in a return to the moral leadership of the lowly peasant of Nazareth who is typified by the figure of Piers the Ploughman. The quest for truth must be made through a life of love to God and fellowman, abstention from all injury and an observance of all the commandments. They who thus live by divine grace will discover truth within their own hearts united to love. As a reform method of doing away with abuses Piers would set all the idlers and wasters at productive toil. This would prove a means of the removal of all social evils and protect the poor from exploitation by the idle rich.

<sup>1</sup> See Reginald Lane Poole's "Some Illustrations of Mediæval Thought."

Against the Church's claim to have the keys of heaven and hell, which doctrine lay at the basis of the practice of the sale of indulgences and other corrupt abuses, Piers declares that any and all who do the Will of God by establishing His justice here in human society will hear the words "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." What seems to have been the original poem concludes with the prayer, "That God may give us grace to work such works while we are here, that after our death at the day of judgment, 'Do-Well' shall rehearse that we did as He commanded."<sup>1</sup>

The ideas of the poem are further carried out in the "Vita de Do-wel, Do-bet and Do-best." In this continuation of the poem the character of Piers the Ploughman continues to play the chief rôle. The poet carries out the idea that if all men were engaged in useful and productive labor, and none took more out of the common products than he actually required, all would be "in common rich."<sup>2</sup> The allegorical figure of Piers the Ploughman stands for the type of man which is to save society from its wrongs and inequalities. Thus, like his Master, Piers becomes a saviour of society, Christ becomes identified with the humblest of His brethren, and Piers, in turn, is merged into Christ. The solidarity of mankind includes Christ and all His fol-

<sup>1</sup> Passus 7, lines 196-200.

<sup>2</sup> Passus 18, line 43, C—text.

lowers, and the Cross of Christ becomes the bond of this unified humanity, as the poet says;

We are all Christ's creatures, and of his coffers rich,  
And brethren of one blood, as well beggars as earls.  
For on Calvary of Christ's blood Christendom sprang,  
And there we became brethren by blood.<sup>1</sup>

It is to the humble peasant class of the fourteenth century to which the author looks to incarnate the love of Christ and thereby reform the abuses of society and the Church. The good Samaritan was the embodiment of loving service and when the poet has a vision of him he is struck by his resemblance to Piers the Ploughman. This love is the one essential. The faith and the hope as held in the Church are seen in the guise of priest and Levite who pass by on the other side. In Piers the Incarnation is extended. Christ is seen as a Knight who wore for his armor the flesh of Piers the Ploughman. Thus the poet symbolizes the ancient warfare of Him Who came to save the world in the Person of the Carpenter of Nazareth. The Word which became flesh in the days of Christ is to become flesh again in the persons of the poet's lowly contemporaries in whom the Spirit of Christ is to continue His warfare of the Kingdom. This striking conception is the climax of the whole allegory.

But the powers of evil are still at large in the world and a purified militant Church must set forward the warfare of its ascended Lord against them.

<sup>1</sup> Passus II, l. 191 f. B—text.

The Church is represented by the poet as having been built to receive the harvest of the Gospel. It thus resembles a great barn or storehouse. Piers the Ploughman is represented as going forth into the world to cultivate the harvest of truth. He is not, like the clergy, one of the guardians of the storehouse, who remain within, for he is doing God's work in the world.

Humanity is now attacked by all the evils and abuses which have been exposed earlier in the poem—injustice, inequality, wrongs, political and social, personified as the hosts of anti-Christ. When thus attacked, the common people as of right look to the Church for refuge. But the Church, alas, because of treachery and abuses within, can offer no adequate protection. The rightful leader of the Church is Conscience, but Conscience has been weakened by the false dealings of Envy, Hypocrisy and Flattery, who hold positions of influence within the Church. These have, as co-conspirators, a friar, who attempts to salve Conscience, by administering soothing but deadly drugs of absolution, dispensations, and indulgences. Aware of his danger Conscience calls out for his ally, "Contrition," to come to his rescue, but Contrition does not respond, having also been drugged with a plaster called "Privy-payment." Realizing that within the Church he is in the hands of dangerous enemies Conscience by a supreme effort succeeds in escaping and goes forth in quest of Piers the Ploughman. Thus the author's hope, as was the case in proph-

etism and in primitive Christianity, is placed in the religious layman who alone can be relied upon to correct the abuses of a corrupt and exploiting ecclesiasticism.

The relationship between Langland and his learned contemporary, John Wycliffe, is not clear. But there is ground for the interesting conjecture that he may have been one of Wycliffe's "poor priests." However that may be, the peasant preacher by reason of his employment of "direct insight" has given a somewhat profounder interpretation of the Mind of Christ than the learned Oxford professor who was encumbered by his learning, by his use of the scholastic logic, and by his predestinarian theology. In spite of these drawbacks he made positive contributions to the prophetic campaign against ecclesiastical exploitation.

His chief interest centered in the proposal advocated by the secular government of England to place restrictions upon the extortions of the Roman Church by means of a program of disendowment. In the reign of Edward III, "the Commons complained that the taxes paid to the Pope amounted yearly to five times the sum paid to the crown."<sup>1</sup> The problem was to find a legal means of correcting this recognized abuse. The attempt to justify such a procedure on moral grounds was made in Wycliffe's tract "*De Dominio Civili*."<sup>2</sup> In this Wy-

<sup>1</sup> Cunningham, "The Growth of English Industry and Commerce," p. 273.

<sup>2</sup> Wycliffe Society Publications.

cliffe undertakes to show that the Church had no moral right to its endowments. He held that it was unscriptural for the followers of Christ to hold endowments. He contended that the evil man had no moral right to hold property. It involved the heinous sin of mammon worship, the worst form of idolatry. He sought to anticipate the danger that disendowment might lead to the cry of martyrdom by declaring that any one who died—not for the cause of another but for the sake of avariciousness—was no more than a “stinking martyr.”

In place of the existing feudal lordship Wycliffe proposed the ideal of “Evangelical lordship” based upon the law of service as formulated in Luke 22:24–27. He held that the law of love as formulated by Paul in I Corinthians 13 should be made to apply to the social order, and that the law of the Gospel ought properly to be taken as the basis of daily life superseding the civil law. He recognized that this would logically lead to communism which he recognized as the ideal form of social organization. The administration should be in the hands of an aristocracy, or government by the best, who would conduct it in the interests of all. He declared that the Jewish theocracy which followed the downfall of the monarchy was the worst conceivable form of government which reached its logical outcome in the crucifixion of Jesus.

While holding to the theoretical superiority of communism Wycliffe felt that it was rendered impracticable by the preponderance of sinful men in



the community. As he wished to attain immediate reform he upheld the monarchy and sought to use it as an instrument in reforming the Church. In this respect he was followed by Martin Luther.

But Wycliffe's greatest service to the cause of Christian democracy lay in his translation of the Scriptures and in the organization of the poor priests to give the Gospel Message to the common people. The prophetic nature of this movement is well brought out in the following description which we quote from Thorold Rogers:

By Wycliffe's labors, the Biblemen had been introduced to the new world of the Old Testament, to the history of the human race, to the primeval Garden and the young world, where the first parents of all mankind lived by simple toil, and were the ancestors of the proud noble and knight, as well as of the down-trodden serf and despised burgher. They read of the brave times when there was no king in Israel, when every man did that was right in his own eyes, and sat under his own vine and fig-tree, none daring to make him afraid. They read how God, through His prophet, had warned Israel of the evils which would come to them when a king should rule over them, and how speedily this was verified in the conduct of the young Rehoboam . . . The God of Israel had bidden His people to be husbandmen, and not mounted knights and men at arms. But, most of all, the preacher would dwell on his own prototype, on the man of God, the wise prophet who denounced kings and princes and high priests, and by God's commission, made them like a potter's vessel, in the day of His wrath; or on those bold judges, who were zealous even to slaying.

For with this Book, so old, and yet so new, the peasant preacher . . . could stir up the souls of these clowns with the true narrative of another people, and would be sure that his way to their hearts and their confidence, would be, as it always has been with the leaders of religious revival, by entirely sympathizing with their wrongs, their sufferings, and their hopes.<sup>1</sup>

Fortunately for Wycliffe, "his martyrdom" did not occur till fifty years after his death. It was then purely symbolical, consisting in the desecration of his grave and the violation of his ashes.

## V

While the prophetic spirit was enkindled in England in the manner described, a similar stirring was manifested in contemporary Bohemia. The religious issue which was there confronted has been formulated by Palacky, the historian—as follows: "Whether Christianity, as it existed at that time in the Western Church, was true to the Mind of its Divine Founder and Proclaimer, whether it had not drifted in certain respects from Him, and whether it ought not to be brought back into its original track; this question applies, alike, to the theory and practice of Christianity; that is, to the doctrine as well as the constitution and discipline of the Church."<sup>2</sup> In modern phrase the watchword of the movement was "Back to Christ."

<sup>1</sup> J. E. Thorold Rogers, "Six Centuries of Work and Wages," p. 254 f.

<sup>2</sup> Palacky, *Geschichte von Böhmen*, vol. III, p. 155.

High on the prophetic roll of honor should be inscribed the name of Konrad Waldhauser. The striking thing about this prophet was the fact of his having been Court chaplain to the reigning house of Bohemia. He is the only prophet ever known to have held such a position and it speaks volumes for the moral seriousness of the Court that his preaching proved acceptable. The power of his preaching may be inferred from its practical fruit as described by Palacky. "The proud women by degrees laid aside their accustomed jewels and costly veils, their clothing set with gold and pearls, and clothed themselves simply. Usury ceased, and many flagrant usurers volunteered to compensate their victims! Notorious prostitutes. . . . whose activities in leading away the daughters of honest burghers, had even penetrated within the Churches, repented and set an example of piety and soberness."<sup>1</sup> Konrad was himself so amazed at these results that he exclaimed, "How is it that the population shows me so much love and attachment while I do not cease to scourge it? The mendicant monks, on the other hand, do the opposite in their preaching; they flatter the people, and behold their Churches are empty!"<sup>2</sup>

Not only did the mendicant monks and secular clergy abstain from preaching repentance, but they declined to follow the example of the repentant laity when Konrad attacked their simony and ex-

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit. vol. III, p. 166.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

ploitation. The Dominicans, following the example of the Jerusalem priesthood, attempted to have the prophet convicted of heresy, the favorite method among the clergy who were more zealous for "soundness in the faith" than for purity of morals. Konrad had accused the orders of such degeneracy "that, if their founders should reappear among them and attempt to hold them to their rule, they would not only refuse to recognize but would stone them."<sup>1</sup> To the credit of the Bohemian king (who was also the Emperor, Karl IV, of the Holy Roman Empire), be it said that largely owing to his intervention the charges of heresy failed.

But though the clergy in general, unlike the men of Nineveh, did not heed the call to repentance, there was one notable exception, Milič von Kremšier, the dean ("Domherr") of the Prague Cathedral, who brought forth fruits meet for repentance. Through the favor of the Emperor he had been holding a plurality of benefices. On his conversion he decided to give up all ecclesiastical revenues and honors in order truly to follow in the footsteps of Christ. For a year he acted as curate to a country parish priest in order to study "the cure of souls." He seems to have been greatly impressed by the doctrines of the anti-Christ whose domination seemed apparent among all classes of people, especially among the higher clergy, the monks, and the rulers of the state. The quality of his courage may be inferred from the fact that in an assembly attended

<sup>1</sup> Palacky, *Loc. cit.*

by Karl IV he declared in his sermon that the Emperor was no less than the great anti-Christ himself. The magnanimity of this Emperor was again exhibited by twice interposing on behalf of the prophet when he had to meet charges preferred against him by the clergy to the Pope. The second charge of heresy comprised twelve counts which are worth repeating as throwing light upon the prevalent ideas of heresy among the clergy. They comprised his doctrine of anti-Christ, his denunciation of usury, his recommendation of frequent reception of the communion by the laity; his treatment of the converted prostitutes, which was described as, at the same time, too rigid and too lenient; his denunciations of the clergy; his attitude on excommunication, which they declared he regarded lightly; his alleged condemnation of the study of the liberal arts; his forbidding of ornaments to the wearing apparel of women; his alleged haughtiness and shielding of himself behind the worldly power, which he was accused of arousing against the spiritual; and, finally, upon his doctrine of "Evangelical poverty," which, they declared, would allow no private possessions to the clergy.

The Bohemian prophetic movement culminated in the persons of John Huss and Jerome of Prague, avowed disciples of John Wycliffe, who were to suffer the martyr's death for their adherence to the English reformer's doctrine. The immediate cause of their trial was Huss's unsparing denunciation of a bull of Pope John XXIII, in which he had granted

plenary indulgences to all who would take part in a "Crusade" against Ladislaw, king of Naples. This bull Huss condemned as utterly anti-Christian, in that it was a summons to Christian men to shed the blood of their fellow Christians, for no other fault than obedience to their king.

The results of his boldness are familiar history—the trial, excommunication, and execution of Huss at the Council of Constance. The absolute wickedness of the ecclesiastical injustice was well illustrated in the violation of Huss's safe conduct, issued for the purpose of luring him to his fate, on the ground that there is no obligation on the part of the Church to keep faith with a heretic. Among the monstrous charges of which he was convicted was that he claimed to be a fourth person of the Godhead—co-equal with the Three Persons of the Trinity.

The martyrdom of Huss, and the means employed to effect it, inflamed the national sentiment of the Bohemians against the Papal tyranny. A revolutionary movement was started under the leadership of Žižka. The diabolical persecution which ensued revived the Apocalyptic spirit of despair so that many looked for the Apocalyptic miraculous intervention of God to put an end to the reign of anti-Christ.

The principles for which the revolutionists contended were set forth in a statement known as the "Four Articles" of which we quote the first and third: "(i) That the Word of God shall be preached and proclaimed by Christian priests in the kingdom

of Bohemia, freely and without hindrance; (iii), Since many priests and monks possess in a worldly manner many earthly goods against the command of Christ, to the destruction of their spiritual office and to the disadvantage of the worldly orders, therefore, that from such priests this lordship (contrary to the rules of their Order) should be taken away and ended, and that they should be led in the way of Christ to live as models according to the Holy Scriptures."<sup>1</sup> It required no less than five "Crusades," the participants in which received full Papal indulgences, to suppress this reformatory movement and to force the tyranny of the Roman Catholic ascendancy upon an unwilling people, many of whose descendants to-day keep alive a spirit of bitter resentment.

## VI

Among the most conspicuous prophetic figures of late mediæval history is that of Savonarola, the prophet monk of the Florentines. This friar of St. Mark's was a diligent student of the ancient Hebrew prophets and from their writings he drew his favorite texts. He modeled his preaching upon theirs, denouncing the hollowness of the gorgeous ceremonial practices and the evil lives and hypocrisy alike of the nobility and of the exploiting priesthood. He accepted and applied to himself the title of "prophet" with a full appreciation of the meaning of the phrase, and though he shrank from the

<sup>1</sup> Palacky, vol. III, part II, p. 135 f.

prophet's martyrdom he finally met it uncomplainingly. After the example of Isaiah he undertook a complete social and political reform of Florence. Full justice has been done him in the classical work of his biographer, Vilari. Because of the success which attended his Florentine social reform, Vilari declared of him that he "deserves to be ranked among the greatest founders of republican states."<sup>1</sup> Perhaps his whole teaching can be summarized by a brief extract from his fourteenth sermon on "Liberty": "The only true liberty consists in the desire for righteousness . . . What liberty is there in being dominated by our own passions? . . . Citizens, would ye be free? First of all, love God, love your neighbor, love one another, love the general welfare: and if ye have this love and union among you, true liberty will be yours."<sup>2</sup>

Had Savanorola but included the precept "love your enemies" and given it a universal application, he would have here made a complete summary of the prophetic Christian doctrine.

## VII

It is with some hesitation that we connect the "Humanism" of the "Oxford reformers" of 1496 with the insurgent prophetic movement. The trio consisting of Erasmus, More and Colet whose fellow work has been so charmingly set forth in See-

<sup>1</sup> "Life and Times of Girolamo Savonarola," English translation, vol. I, p. 301.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Vilari, *op. cit.* vol. I, p. 338.



bohm's "Oxford Reformers," may be characterized as having possessed the prophetic theology without the prophetic spirit of self-sacrifice in militant devotion to the prophetic cause. They remain mere idealistic theorists, knowing the better way but failing to do it. The paradox is illustrated in the title of Erasmus' "Enchiridion" or "The Handy-Book of the Christian Soldier." Erasmus described his object in writing this book as follows: "I wrote to display neither genius nor eloquence, but simply for this, to counteract the vulgar errors of those who think that religion consists in ceremonies, in more than Jewish observances, while they neglect what really pertains to piety. I have tried to teach, as it were, the art of piety in the same way as others have laid down the rules of (military) discipline." But the defect of this manual is that which we should expect of a writer on military tactics who had never participated in a military campaign, or himself submitted to the discipline of military training.

Thomas More in his "Utopia" produced a complete satire on the evils, political and ecclesiastical, of his time. He also propounded a scheme of the true organization of the social order that should be founded upon the teachings of Jesus. But its very title "Utopia" showed that he regarded it as an impracticable dream. He showed men what was the true social program of Jesus, which Jesus died in order to bring to pass, and having drawn the picture he practically abandoned it as useless. He

remained one who said "and did not." He died a martyr's death, not for the cause of the kingdom of God but as a reactionary upholding the cause of the Roman Church against a cause certainly worthy of reprobation—that of the sensual exploiting king Henry VIII.

Colet gave promise of great prophetic boldness, when he denounced in St. Paul's Cathedral the proposed invasion by Henry VIII of the soil of France for selfish dynastic reasons, but he allowed the king to trick him by the shallow pretense that the proposed scheme of conquest was in reality but a far-seeing measure of defense against future invasions by France. This favorite device of autocracies of justifying campaigns of conquest on the pretext that they are defensive measures has shown remarkable vitality in its survival to the present day, and modern Colets seem not to be more successful in dealing with the situation.

We now turn from this group of theorists who seemed to have had a clear insight into the Christianity of Christ but failed to apply it, to the men who identified Christianity with the Pauline interpretation but took the risks of putting this Christianity of a secondary type to the actual task of reforming the Church.

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## CHAPTER XII

## THE SO-CALLED REFORMATION

THE Reformation of Luther and Calvin reformed the Church on the basis of those teachers' interpretation of Paulinism which they identified with Christianity. Therein consisted its weakness. With Paul the scope of religion was confined to the cult, a limited, though beloved community. Therefore the so-called Reformation restricted itself to the Reformation of the Church as its proper field. The Christianity of Christ contemplated, not the erection of a cult but the renovation of human society in its furthest reaches by incarnating the principles of the prophetic theology and ethic in the body of a community co-extensive with all the interests of mankind. The Reformation of Luther and Calvin met with a wide degree of success. But there was also a contemporary attempt at a reformation of the whole social order according to the program of Jesus in the movement known as "Anabaptism." This attempt failed and its failure was brought about by the joint efforts of the older ecclesiasticism and the newer Pauline ecclesiasticism of the Protestant Reformers.

## I

Though, as already said, the Reformation did not succeed in reviving real Christianity, yet it accomplished much good in a negative way by making

inroads upon the monopoly of ecclesiastical authority and the doctrine which made "Divine" the vested rights of Popes, bishops and the lower clergy. But it accomplished harm in that while combating one type of authority it established another of mixed value. The doctrine of the equal Divine inspiration of all parts of the Bible placed the sanction of God equally upon the exploiting system of the priestly code and the prophetic message which cut at the root of the priestly scheme of external control of religion. This led to a synthesis of irreconcilable opposites which has been responsible for the failure of Protestantism to attain a true understanding of the real nature of Christianity, and has been responsible for the multiplication of Protestant sects. In place of the tyranny of the infallible Church, it placed the tyranny of priestly theology and ethics which was given an equal place with the spiritual utterances of the representatives of the prophetic revelation of the real Nature of God. While it was doing this it erected in the place of "the Divine right of the hierarchy" the "Divine right of Princes"—a costly error which has become one of the chief psychological sources of the present world war initiated to extend the "Divine right" of its fanatical upholder in the modern Kaiser to cover a greater successor to the "Holy Roman Empire."

The Reformation of Luther did much to put an end to exploitation by the Church in Germany, but Protestantism became subservient to the secular

exploiting classes and became partaker with them in the blood of the prophets of real religion.

The exploitations by the Roman Church which had for centuries been extending its machinery of exactions, realizing a revenue from baptisms, burials, marriages, dispensations, requiem masses, as well as from other sources, at length exploited the sale of indulgences to a shameless and scandalous extent. It was this, rather than any theological issue, which at length awakened the reformatory zeal of Luther to the publication of his famous "Ninety-Five Theses" against the practice. Here are a few of the popular doctrines preached by the peddlers of indulgences which Luther denounced and for which he was condemned by the Papal Court. "They preach man, who say that the soul flies out of purgatory as soon as the money thrown into the chest rattles." <sup>1</sup> "Why does not the Pope empty purgatory for the sake of most holy charity and of the supreme necessity of souls—this being the most just of all reasons—if he redeem an infinite number of souls for the sake of that most fatal thing, money, to be spent on building of basilica—this being a very slight reason?" <sup>2</sup> The irony of the following was well calculated to stir up the wrath of those who were profiting by this traffic: "Again, what is this new kindness of God and the Pope, in that, for money's sake, they permit an impious man and an enemy to God, to redeem a pious soul which loves

<sup>1</sup> Thesis 27.

<sup>2</sup> Thesis 82.

God, and yet do not redeem that same pious and beloved soul, out of free charity, on account of its own need?"<sup>1</sup> "Christians should be taught that he who gives to a poor man, or lends to a needy man, does better than if he bought pardons. Because, by works of charity, charity increases, and the man becomes better; while, by means of pardons, he does not become better, but only freer from punishment."<sup>2</sup>

The chief power of the Roman Church to exploit then rested, as it still rests to-day, upon the superstitious fears of men, carefully nourished by the Church's teachers, from the days of childhood, that rescue from eternal hell depends upon docile obedience to the dictations of the Church through its clergy.

In the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith alone, Luther sought to set men free from the fear of the ecclesiastical control of their destinies by placing the conditions of their own salvation entirely within the reach of their own acts of faith. The acceptance of this doctrine at once liberated men both from the spiritual and the temporal exploiting tyranny of the Church of Rome.

"All who believe in Christ," says Luther, "are kings and priests in Christ."<sup>3</sup> As kings the Christians are "the freest of all men," as priests they

<sup>1</sup> Thesis 84.

<sup>2</sup> Theses 43 and 44.

<sup>3</sup> Tract on Christian Liberty, in "First Principles of the Reformation," Ed. Horace Wall, p. 114.

have a dignity far higher, "because that by that priesthood Christians are worthy to appear before God, to pray for others, and to teach one another mutually the things which are of God." <sup>1</sup>

As all believers are kings and priests, those appointed to office and administration in the Church, are not called to rule, but in a special sense are called to serve. The error of the Roman Church consists in having reversed this Divine order, for, in the words of Luther, it designates as "Pope, bishop and lords," those whom the Scripture plainly calls "ministers, servants, and stewards." "This bad system has now issued in such a pompous display of power, and such a terrible tyranny, that no earthly government can be compared with it, as if the laity were something else than Christians. Through this perversion of things, it has happened that the knowledge of Christian grace, of faith, of liberty, and altogether of Christ, has utterly perished, and has been succeeded by an intolerable bondage to human works and laws; and, according to the Lamentations of Jeremiah, we have become the slaves of the vilest men on earth, who abuse our misery, to all the disgraceful and ignominious purposes of their own free will." <sup>2</sup>

The reformatory consequences of this doctrine may be seen to follow easily. Since all believers are the Church, those who have arrogated to themselves the office of rulers, when they were intended

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit. p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit. p. 117.

to be but the servants of all, must be made to see and feel their error. As the leaders of the Church refuse to repent and reform themselves, then the responsibility falls upon the laity of compelling them to do so, no matter what the threats or pretensions of the resisting officials. This line of thought is developed to its logical conclusion in his "Address to the German Nobility." He summarized the situation in the following words:

The Romanists have, with great adroitness, drawn three walls around themselves, with which they have hitherto protected themselves, so that no one could reform them, whereby all Christendom has fallen terribly.

Firstly, if pressed by the temporal power, they have affirmed and maintained that the temporal power has no jurisdiction over them. But on the contrary that the spiritual power is above the temporal. Secondly, if it were proposed to admonish them with the Scriptures, they objected that no one may interpret the Scriptures but the Pope. Thirdly, if they were threatened with a Council, they pretended that no one may call a Council but the Pope.<sup>1</sup>

Luther follows Wycliffe in the belief that the reformation of the Church could be accomplished only through the instrumentality of the secular power. Accordingly, it becomes necessary for him to find moral grounds for this program. He finds his basis in the doctrine of the universal priesthood of all believers and of the Divine nature of the

<sup>1</sup> "Luther's Primary Works," edited by Henry Wace, D.D., and C. A. Buchheim, Ph.D., Phil., 1885, p. 105.



state. "Forasmuch as the temporal power has been ordained by God for the punishment of the bad and the protection of the good, therefore we must let it do its duty throughout the whole Christian body without respect of persons; whether it strikes Popes, bishops, priests, monks or nuns." <sup>1</sup>

Luther succeeded in enlisting a large portion of the German nobility in his reformatory movement. But it is doubtful if the sense of duty as set forth by Luther was a stronger element than the desire of the secular rulers and of their subjects to be rid of the ecclesiastical vampire that was sucking the blood from the social and economic life of the German states. It is interesting to note that Luther shared the Apocalyptic expectation that the world was soon to pass away and be superseded by the coming of the Kingdom of Christ from above. This view has always paralyzed the efforts on the part of men to usher in the Kingdom of God as futile.

Luther regarded salvation from the purely personal point of view, and overlooked entirely the social meaning of the doctrine of the Kingdom of God. This is most clearly brought out in Luther's catechism in the following questions and answers:

Q. Thy kingdom come, what is that?

A. God's kingdom assuredly comes without our prayers, but we pray in this prayer that it may come to us.

Q. How does this happen?

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit. p. 23.

A. When the heavenly Father gives us His Holy Ghost so that through His grace we believe His Holy Word, and live a godly life here in time and hereafter in eternity.

Thus Luther transforms the Lord's Prayer for the coming of the Messianic Kingdom to the world into a prayer for the salvation of the individual soul, against which quest Jesus warned those who would be His followers. He thus throws away the pivotal thought of Jesus' doctrine of the Kingdom. For the same reason and in like manner He abandons the one vital thing in the Absolute ethic of Jesus, the enacting clause. In place of this he sanctions the principle of inconsistency or compromise between Christian faith and practice in the most explicit terms. "A Christian contains two persons, namely, a believing and spiritual, and a civil or worldly. The believing endures all things, does not eat or drink, does not beget children, nor concern himself with worldly matters. But the civil person is subject to worldly laws, and ordinances, owes obedience and must defend and protect its own as the laws command." <sup>1</sup>

This fatal principle is not far removed from the immoral principle underlying the cultus that there was no connection between the worship of God and the type of life of the worshipper. It sets up the fatal double standard. It is a flat denial of the

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by F. G. Ward, "Darstellung und Würdigung der Ansichten Luthers von Staat und seinen Wirtschaftlichen Aufgaben," p. 16.

warning of Jesus "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon" which it paraphrases and contradicts at the same time by the sentiment, "A man must serve both God and Mammon. The spiritual person within him is only concerned with God. The civil person within him must serve mammon." Thus Lutheranism sanctions a principle fatal to the understanding of the primary demand of Jesus that the whole man—body, spirit, mind and will—should be given to the loving service of God and brother man.

This fact explains why Lutheranism accomplished its work when it reformed the abuses of the Church and shows further why the whole weight of the influence of Luther is cast in the way of the proposal to reform the abuses of the secular order, and, further, why it must be rejected by all who would advance to the complete reformation of the world's life under the leadership of Jesus Christ.

## II

It is not necessary to our theme to point out the differences between Lutheranism and Calvinism in detail. It is enough to say that Calvin considered that the daily life of the Christian man should be made to conform to the law of God. His system was far more favorable to democracy and where Calvinism has prevailed there has been a greater emphasis laid upon civil liberty than where Lutheranism has had sway. But the stumbling block of Calvinism is found in its restriction of salvation to a comparatively small body of the

elect, in its doctrine of predestination and in its priestly theology which conceived of God as a capricious and arbitrary Omnipotent despot. His theology, therefore, contradicts the universalism of the prophets and of Jesus and so limits the universal application of the law of love. For it is no longer possible to ask frail man to love his enemies when God hates His Own enemies with the bitterness of hell. Like Lutheranism Calvinism also failed to revive the Christianity of Christ.

### III

We now turn to see whether the English Reformation was more successful in transcending the limitations of the cult idea and in recovering the universalism of the true Christian theology and ethic.

In its controversy with Protestantism, Anglicanism, through its accredited mouthpieces the bishops, claims that because of its retention of the episcopal office the Church of England and its allied communions have remained in unity with the Apostolic Church. It rejects many of the Roman Catholic doctrines and practices but protests chiefly against the papacy as an invasion of the final Apostolic rights and equality of the College of Bishops. The Anglican Church and its branches recognize the "validity" of the Roman Catholic ministry and the sacraments, but deny that quality to the ministry and the sacraments of non-episcopal bodies. Theoretically, it is only through the Holy

Spirit transmitted through the hands of the bishop that the sanction and presence of the Holy Spirit may be secured. Therefore, those who forsake the society of the bishops, separate themselves from the fellowship of the Apostles and so place themselves outside the bounds of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Comparing this with our foregoing study it is at once apparent that we have the cult idea in a very exclusive form. It pays no regard to the prophetic idea that the true relationship of the soul to God is a personal and moral relationship not dependent upon the mediation of ecclesiastical go-betweens. In denying the doctrine of the Apostolical Succession through the bishops Protestantism comes nearer to the prophetic principle of the freedom of the individual to unmediated personal access to God. In the light of our investigations if our contention has been maintained successfully, that the Twelve Apostles immediately after the death of Jesus committed themselves to a doctrine of the Kingdom radically opposed to that of their Master, the Apostolical Succession, though an established fact, would yet remain unrelated to the program of Jesus and without value, because of the break in continuity between the religion of Jesus and that of His earliest followers.

But the rejection of the Historic Episcopate by many English-speaking Christians at the time of the Reformation was not so much due to the theoretical consideration as to the Protestant principle formulated in the words of the late Father

Tyrrell: "There can be no Apostolical Succession apart from Christlikeness of character."

A study of some of the Puritan attacks upon the Anglican Episcopate shows that they did not base their rejection of the bishops upon the theoretical view that the episcopate was not founded on Scripture, but on the ground that the fruits of the lives of the then bishops were incompatible with their claim that the authority which they represented had its source in a commission of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

The English Reformation as it was finally accomplished in Anglicanism was "A Reformation from Above"—originating with the monarch. Parallel with this there was undoubtedly a strong democratic reformatory movement following the lines of Continental Protestantism. Its adherents for the most part ultimately separated from the established Church.

<sup>1</sup> For the material that follows I am indebted to the graduating thesis as yet in MS. form, of the Rev. T. M. Griffith, a graduate of the Rochester Theological Seminary, entitled "The Elizabethan Episcopate, an Historical Survey, and a Study of Martin Marprelate's Charges against the Bishops." Among others he quotes from the following sources, John Petheram, "An Epistle to the Terrible Priests of a Convocation House" (1843), (a reprint), and "An Epitome of the first book of Dr. John Bridge's" "Defense of the Church of England in Ecclesiastical Matters" (1843), (a reprint), "Hay Any Work for Cooper" (1845), (a reprint), "An Almond for a Parrot" (1846), (a reprint), "A Pap with a Hatchet" (1844), (a reprint). Edward Arber, "Early English Reprints," reprints I and II, English Scholars' Library, 1878. William Pierce, "The Martin Marprelate Tracts" (1911).

Whatever may be thought of the claim that the Apostolical Succession passed from the Roman Catholic consecrators to their Anglican successors, the Episcopal Succession of exploitation seems not at this time to have been broken.

The Anglican bishops assumed a position of hostility toward those of the Roman obedience. Each denied the other's claim to jurisdiction. But both kinds looked alike to the Protestant. The Anglican bishops, in the words of the "Martinist" were "petty anti-Christ, petty popes, proud prelates, intolerable with standards of the Reformation, enemies of the Gospel and most covetous wretched priests."<sup>1</sup>

Shakespeare with the insight of genius, makes Cardinal Woolsey, on his downfall, lament that he had not served his God with half the zeal that he had served his king. He had been setting a precedent which seems to have been followed by the Elizabethan bishops who appear to have been not only the appointees but also the tools of the crown. To this Froude bears witness that Elizabeth in her choice of bishops "preferred persons whom she could sound from their lowest note to the top of their compass, and she accepted moral defects in consideration of spiritual complacency."<sup>2</sup> If they had grave faults her power over them was the greater for she could threaten to depose them. Among them were many "Calvinists or Lutherans

<sup>1</sup> "Epistle to the Terrible Priests," p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Froude's "History of England," vol. 12, p. 22.

with no special reverence for the office they had undertaken; and she treated them in turn with studied contempt. She called them 'Doctors' as the highest title to which she considered them to have any real right; and if they showed themselves officious in punishing Catholics she brought them up with a sharp reprimand; and if their Protestantism was conspicuously earnest they were deposed and imprisoned." <sup>1</sup> Archbishop Parker, the Primate of the whole Church, seems to have been a model of exploitation. Of him Froude says, "He had been corrupt in the distribution of his own patronage, and he sold his interest to others. No Catholic prelate in the old easy times had more flagrantly abused the dispensation system. Every year he made profits by admitting children to the cure of souls for money. He used a graduating scale in which the price of inducting an infant into a benefice varied with age, children under fourteen not being inadmissible if the adequate fees were forthcoming." <sup>2</sup>

Practically all the charges made against the bishops and their clergy by William Langland in the fourteenth century were now made by the Puritans in the sixteenth. The Protestants were oppressed and suffered imprisonment, as true sons of the prophets. The ecclesiastics, abusing their civil powers, were the successors of those who had persecuted the prophets.

<sup>1</sup> Froude, *op. cit.* vol. 12, p. 568.

<sup>2</sup> Froude, *op. cit.* vol. 11, p. 100.



In short, the English Reformation appears not so much as a religious Reformation as an internal conflict for the control of the ecclesiastical political machine. The English episcopate was a veritable exploiting ecclesiastical autocracy and later Charles I recognized that his own Autocracy and that of the bishops stood or fell together.

To-day high Anglicans declare that Protestantism, because of the lack of the episcopal order, is "of men," whereas they assert Catholicism to be "of God" because of the unbroken succession of bishops which it maintains. Judging them "by their fruits" the Puritans believed that the bishops held their office not from God but from men. Whatever the final verdict of history we may plainly see that the bishops exercised such secular lordship as the Gentiles used and even yet in England their palaces and endowments and their title of "my Lord" are felt by the common people outside the Anglican Church to represent more truly their actual status than the claim which is put forward in their behalf to be servants of God and of the common people.

#### IV

Though Lutheranism and Calvinism put Paulinism in place of the Christianity of Jesus, and though Anglicanism maintained the idea of the exclusive cult and gloried in it, yet the true Spirit of Jesus was leading some of the more radical reformers, and His movement might have come to its own among

certain of the so-called Anabaptists, had His Cause not been crucified afresh in the violent suppression of these true Christians.

The Anabaptists started from the fundamental precept of the prophetic theology, that the Spirit of God comes to every man to guide him into the truth and to sustain him in righteous conduct. In place of the authority of the Church, and in place of the authority of the letter of the Scripture, they rejected all external authority except the direct teachings of Jesus Himself as found in the Gospels and as interpreted and applied in the individual case by the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

The aptly named Zwickau prophets, speaking out of their own religious experience, told of an inner life, of a knowledge of God and friendship with Him. For them the starting point was the Gospel which Jesus proclaimed from the outset of His ministry—faith and repentance toward God. Their original leaders seemed to have been Max Stübner, Nicolaus Storch and Thomas Münzer. The two latter were Bohemians and so of the country which had produced its share of prophets in the fourteenth century. Münzer was in priest's orders, "They agreed with the rest of the reformers that the standard of truth was the Bible, and that all things

<sup>1</sup> An admirable history of this movement is found in Richard Heath's "Anabaptism, from its rise in Zwickau to its fall in Münster," 1521 to 1536, London, Alexander & Shephard, Furnival Street, Holborn, 1895, to which I acknowledge indebtedness.

must be reformed by the Word of God; but no one, they contended, could rightly understand the Scriptures unless he was taught by the Holy Spirit. To every one a measure of that Spirit was given, but only to those who faithfully listened to its Voice in their hearts would light arise as to the true meaning of the Scriptures. *And only those would effect a reformation who were obedient to the commands of Christ.*"<sup>1</sup>

Here at last reformers begin to appear who go back of Paulinism, which concerns itself only with the internal life of the cult, to the teachings of Jesus Himself which concern the organization of the life of mankind.

Münzer began by taking the Sermon on the Mount as a program. He taught that on this as a basis the real religion of Christ demanded a complete reorganization of society and of state as well as of the Church, into a democracy wholly animated by love and the law of service. The true significance of the real message of Anabaptism has been obscured by the emphasis laid upon the doctrine of adult baptism. But a little reflection will enable us to understand why they regarded infant baptism as a corruption. They must have refused to believe the Romish doctrine that unbaptized infants go to hell. They could find no warrant for it in Scripture. Moreover, as baptism was the outward symbol of repentance they could not see how infants could repent before they had knowledge

<sup>1</sup> Heath, op. cit. p. 2.

and experience of sin. Apparently the Church was full of men and women baptized in infancy who were living lives contrary to the teachings of Jesus without any reproach of conscience or serious effort after real amendment. The truth was apparent that baptism had ceased to be what it had been in the New Testament, a symbol of death unto a life of sin and a rising again into a life of righteousness, and admission into a movement of men ready to give their lives in the warfare of Christ's Kingdom. Instead, baptism had become a sacramental initiatory rite into a cult, membership in which was supposed to guarantee a happy immortality in the world beyond, leaving its members free in this present life to exploit their fellows and live the life like that of the non-Christian world. The Anabaptists sought to give renewed significance to baptism by making it the sign of self-consecration to the Cause of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Luther combated their teachings and it is most interesting to note that in doing so he was forced to fall back upon something he had formerly rejected, the authority of the Church and the consensus of all Christians. Before he had met the prophets he wrote to Melanchthon in June 17, 1552, in substance as follows:

So far he had heard nothing of these preachers but what Satan might say and do. Let them prove their mission either by authority from the Church, or by miracles. How do they know that children do not believe? Faith is not always active, as for example,

when we are asleep. Besides, may not the faith of others be efficacious on their behalf? The universal agreement of the whole Church about infant baptism is a miracle; even the heretics acknowledge it." etc., etc.<sup>1</sup>

As the Zwickau prophets could get no hearing from the reformers and as the ruling classes were deaf to their arguments taken from Scripture (for even the Lutheran nobles did not accept the authority of Scripture teaching where it conflicted with their own class interests), it was perhaps inevitable that as the movement gained impetus it should become actively revolutionary. The peasant adherents of these leaders relied for a time upon the good faith of the Protestant reformers. The "Twelve Articles" which they drew up setting forth their social rights as drawn from the Scripture ended with this final Article:

If any of these Articles are contrary to the Scriptures we will renounce them, or, if any in accordance with the Scriptures have been omitted we hold ourselves bound to accept and maintain them. The peace of Jesus Christ be with every one. Amen.

But Luther ignored the challenge of their appeal to Scriptural authority, knowing in advance, perhaps, that they had the best of the argument. He kept silent till at length the peasants, animated by a spirit of zealotism sought by force of arms to win their liberty. Then a very little demon of the pagan *Furor Teutonicus* took possession of him and

<sup>1</sup> Heath, op. cit. p. 5.

he wrote with savage "ruthlessness," "In the case of an insurgent every man is both judge and executioner. Therefore, whoever can should knock down, strangle, and stab all such, privately or publicly, and think nothing so venomous, pernicious and devilish as an insurgent. . . . It may happen that he who is on the side of the authorities may be killed. But if he fought with the conscientiousness spoken of, he is a true martyr before God. . . . On the other hand, that which perishes on the peasant side is an everlasting hell brand. Such wonderful times are these, that a Prince can merit Heaven better with bloodshed than another with prayer." <sup>1</sup>

Here the fanatical Luther exhibiting the Apocalyptic frenzy of hatred against those whom he regarded as enemies speaks with the authority of a Pope organizing so-called "Crusades" against rebellious Catholics and heretics, and promises the equivalent of plenary indulgences to those whose piety is shown in slaying. Alas, that the Lutheran spirit of ruthlessness did not die with him! Protestant and Catholic armies united to stamp out this "evil" in which between one hundred and one hundred and fifty thousand peasants lost their lives fighting for liberty which by the standards of Luther's infallible Scriptures they were entitled to enjoy.

We have classified the Zwickau prophets and their followers with the Anabaptists, but perhaps

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Heath, *op. cit.* p. 20.

this title should properly be reserved for those pacifists whose movement arose in Zürich under the leadership of Wilhelm Reabali, Konrad Grebel and Simon Stump, who separated themselves from the reformer Zwingli. They refused to baptize infants and formed a new religious community founded upon the effort to practice the ethics of Jesus. They baptized each other (not by immersion, however), and thus began a short-lived separate Church. They had in the main the same beliefs as those of the Zwickau prophets about the inner life, adding as an essential part of their program the practice of non-resistance based upon the Commission of Jesus to the Twelve. They held (quite truly it would appear) that true Christians are in the world like sheep among wolves. They pledged themselves on no account to defend themselves from enemies or avenge wrongs done to themselves. The exploiting classes must have felt grave alarm at this sudden manifestation of real Christianity. If it continued to spread it would revolutionize the whole civilized order. Therefore, they were persecuted alike by Protestants and Catholics, by the ecclesiastical and secular rulers who eagerly accepted the rôle of the wolves.

In 1526 by edict the Zürich Rath (Protestant) threatened with death by drowning all who were baptized anew. Three years later the Catholic Emperor Charles V ordered all Anabaptists wherever found to be put to death by fire or sword without even the form of a trial. Many were cast into prison

and met death at the stake or by drowning. Sebastian Frank asserts that the number of these truly Christian martyrs had reached two thousand by the year 1530.

In all these persecutions they showed the spirit of Jesus' exhortation: "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." As the Polish Cardinal, the Bishop of Warmice, wrote of them:

"They are far readier than the followers of Luther and Zwingli to meet death, and bear the hardest tortures for their faith. For they run to suffer punishments, no matter how horrible, as if to banquet." . . .<sup>1</sup>

Having seen the fate of these true adherents of the prophetic program of Jesus at the hands of His nominal adherents, it remains to examine the internal organizations as they were given the short-lived opportunity to work them out. Their best opportunity was found in Moravia which early became a refuge for the Anabaptists and remained so till the year 1526 when the Province fell to the rule of the House of Austria, when their protection was withdrawn. Here in a brief space they worked out their community ideas.

There were here, at one time, eighty-six "households,"

Under the system which Hutter is mainly credited with developing, there was over each household one who took

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Encyl. Brit. Article "Anabaptists."



the general superintendence, who was called the "householder." With him were a number of persons called "ministers of the necessities." Each household had a common kitchen, common bakehouse, common brew-house, a common room for child-birth, a common school-house, another room for mothers with young infants, and a common nursery in which the community sisters looked after the children. Other sisters attended on the sick. The old people were cared for with even more pains and attention than the young, who were strictly kept from the world, no mixed marriages being allowed. No idler was permitted in the community. The meals were common but each family had its own rooms. In the morning, after silent prayer, they all went to work, some in the fields, others in the workshops. They put their wages into a common box, which was under the care of a treasurer. Frugal living and assiduous working brought wealth. The communities came to have lands, machinery and shops. But their property was not used simply for the benefit of the particular community that had earned it, but for the whole body of baptized believers. Vice was practically unknown; if any evils did arise the only punishments resorted to were public reproof, suspension of the communion of the Lord's Supper, and finally, exclusion from the community.

It is said that the Moravian communities at this time numbered seventy thousand persons. They refused no one on account of poverty, if he gave evidence of being born again. Their emissaries went in all directions.<sup>1</sup>

By a royal edict in 1535 King Ferdinand ordered the Anabaptists expelled and the Moravian Diet agreed. Hutter, their great organizer, was tortured

<sup>1</sup> Heath, *op. cit.* pp. 69, 70.

and burned in public in Innsbruck on the 24th of February, 1536.

Thus once again the Spirit of Jesus seeking to incarnate Itself in the whole life of a community was quenched in a baptism of blood and fire by those who held their victims to be "heretics" and themselves to be true adherents of the Church of Christ.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE RECOVERY OF A LOST CHRISTIANITY

*Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the  
throne,  
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the  
dim unknown,  
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above  
His Own.*

WE turn from the tragic picture of truth upon the scaffold to the future vision of that truth upon the throne. Truth crucified, defeated, rises ever again from the tomb and ascends to the Right Hand of God to return again to establish the everlasting reign of the Republic of God. Though men and nations may again and again put God out of their hearts and lives yet mankind is continually drawn by its supreme highest need to return to God. Mankind has always felt and always will feel the need of God. If a man rejects the Living God he enthrones some idol of his own in the void. Even the lowest materialist does this, and the lowest type of materialist is the mammon-worshipper, the man who translates the highest ideals of life, religion, patriotism and art—into terms of commercialism or exploitation. All exploiters are in essence idolaters, whose God is the foe of the Living God.

## I

A system of thought or a "*Lebensanschauung*" may become an idol placed on the altar of an individual's or a nation's life driving out the Shekinah of God. Such a system of thought is found in materialistic neo-Darwinism. This creed is the chief modern intellectual antagonist of the true Christian doctrine. Let us for a moment contrast them. Christianity teaches that men are in reality spiritual beings. Each individual, however fettered to an evolving animal organism, has a transcendent, eternal value. Each man, however submerged, is "an eternal differentiation of the Absolute." Christianity teaches "the potential equality of all spirits." The great heresy is the denial of this doctrine whether by precept or by practice. Therefore, the wilful subordination of the weaker by the stronger (exploitation) is the chief deadly sin. The neo-Darwinian theory holds the opposite. Weak individuals and weak peoples exist to be used, dominated and exploited by the strong. This is a modern analogue of the tribal idea that God has a few favorites and those not His favorites exist only for the benefit of the "chosen people."

While rejecting all traditional religions, modern leaders of thought, particularly in Germany, have revived the equivalent of the ancient tribal cults. This point of view is clearly brought out in the following quotation:

The creed of the *Allmacht* of a natural selection, based

on violent struggle, is the Gospel of the German intellectuals; all else is illusion and anathema. . . .

This struggle must not only go on, but it should go on, so that this natural law may work out in its cruel, inevitable way, the salvation of the human species. By its salvation is meant its desirable natural evolution. The human group which is in the most advanced evolutionary stage as regards internal organization and form of social relationship is best, and should, for the sake of the species, be preserved at the expense of the less advanced, the less effective. It should win in the struggle for existence, and this struggle should occur precisely that the various types may be tested, and the best not only preserved, but put in a position to impose its kind of social organization, its *Kultur*, on the others, or, alternatively, to destroy and replace them.<sup>1</sup>

## II

The destiny of mankind will be ultimately determined by which of these two interpretations of life wins the victory over the thought and practice of the human race. There are no other alternatives. If the Christian doctrine of Heaven on earth does not triumph, the evolutionary doctrine will see to it that the past and present Hell on earth shall be perpetuated. There can be no middle ground between the triumph of Heaven and the triumph of Hell, and no soul can remain neutral. The neutral is already an agent of Hell—a subject of the Empire of Evil. “He that is not for us is against

<sup>1</sup> Vernon Kellogg, “Headquarters Nights,” Article in *Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1917.

us." The neutral is the enemy of Christ. All the prophets press for a decision. "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve. If Jehovah (the God of the prophets) be God, serve Him; if Baal (the God of the cult of the exploiters) be God, serve Him." He who hesitates is lost. "No man can serve two masters."

### III

The object of this book has been to discover and state just what Christianity is. In order to do so it has been necessary to distinguish between "Historic Christianity" and the Christianity of the Founder. If our quest has been successful the following facts have been established: The world's greatest need as in the past so to-day is to understand and follow the Christianity of Christ. One of the younger leaders of American philosophical thought recently expressed to me the conviction that "the discovery and statement of what Christianity really is, is the most important service which a man can render the world to-day."

Christianity is not the religion of a cult but transcends all cults in that it is the ultimate universal world-religion adapted to the needs of every individual and of every race and of the world taken as a whole. Of this religion various cults, large and small, are but "broken lights." This universal religion was not the discovery of Jesus. He recognized it as having been in the world before Him and as having already been preached by the prophets.

We have confined our study to the prophets of Israel because they are in the line of the prophetic succession of Christianity. The study of comparative religion is teaching us that prophetism is not confined to any race of men. We have now to admit that all true prophets are spokesmen of the Holy Spirit. These true prophets may be discerned by their adherence to the following prophetic truths:—The infinite worth of the individual; the ~~universal~~ Fatherhood of God; and the ~~universal~~ Divine Community embracing the potential equality of ~~all~~ spirits; and the ultimate solidarity of God and ~~man~~ ~~kind~~ in the Divine Community of the Kingdom of God. Wherever these truths are felt and accepted there is the Eternal Logos of God, "the Light which enlightens every man;"<sup>1</sup> there is Christianity, there is the transcendent and immanent Christ Himself. This truth is embraced in the universalism of Jesus and His statement "He that is not against us is for us."

Some day the writings of the prophets of the Far East will be ~~gathered~~ gathered together in one volume with the prophets of the Near East and of the West into a universal "Holy Scripture" of the Kingdom of God, and the spiritual forces of the ends of the earth shall unite and find universal recognition as the Inspired Word of a world community gathered into the fold of the Great Shepherd—God.

<sup>1</sup> John 1:9 (Moffat's version).

## IV

As we have said "Historic Christianity" has fallen far short of the universalism of the Founder. Catholicism by its very name asserting a claim to universalism has been false to true Catholicity in that it has remained the theocratic religion of a dominating cult. Protestantism passed over the universal ethic and theology of Jesus to accept the Pauline view of the elect. This fact was not grasped by the late Prof. Royce in his otherwise truly Christian contribution, "The Problem of Christianity."<sup>1</sup>

He takes the limited community idea of St. Paul and makes its application universal. Thus he supplements the Pauline idea of the community with that of Jesus. In spite of this fact Royce remained a Protestant in spirit though a Christian in theory. This came out in his unhappy bitterness toward the German people after the beginning of the world war. His Protestantism prevented him from making an application of the difficult principle of Jesus' "Love your enemies," to those whom he considered the enemies of the universal community. But in regard to this it is to be said that Royce's abiding influence will proceed from that which he said while on the heights rather than from the sad utterances of one in the depths of disappointed sorrow.

The supernatural character of Christianity comes out in contrast to the best of human philosophy in its possession of undying hope, and men of Christian

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 166.



vision are seeing even in the presence of this darkness strong reasons for hope that Christianity, that is, real Christianity, is about to come into its own. There are two reasons which we will now mention both of which appear paradoxical. The first is the recognition quite commonly made that the Christianity of the cult is not the Christianity of the Founder. The colossal inconsistency of nations praying to the same God for strength to injure other nations is clearly seen. Also, the claim of one nation that God regards it as His chosen people provokes the derisive mirth of those who have ceased to fear the ancient tribal God. The second reason for hopefulness lies in that which the adherents of the cult have held to be discouraging, namely, the loss of the hold of the organized Christian bodies as such on the minds alike of intellectual leaders and of the estranged "masses." This would indeed be discouraging if it meant that men were rejecting the cult ethic and the cult theology and its organized representatives because they felt no need of the true God and of the coming of His Kingdom. On the contrary, an appreciation of the ethic and and theology of Jesus is nowhere more enlightened than it is among many who have rejected "Historic Christianity." This is the theme of a book which has recently appeared which in spite of a failure of insight on important problems on the part of its author nevertheless expresses the central truth of importance. The fact which we have just stated is brought out in the following quotation from H.

G. Wells's "God the Invisible King," quoted with approval on the cover of a recent number of *The Churchman*.

All mankind is seeking God. There is not a nation nor a city in the globe where men are not being urged at this moment by the Spirit of God in them towards the discovery of God. This is not an age of despair, but an age of hope in Asia as in all the world besides. The Kingdom of God on earth is not a metaphor, not a mere spiritual state, not a dream, not an uncertain project; it is the thing before us, it is the close and inevitable destiny of mankind. In but a few centuries God will have led us out of the dark forest of these present wars and confusions into the open brotherhood of His rule. God takes all. He takes you, blood and bones and house and acres, He takes skill and influence and expectation. For all the rest of your life you are nothing but God's agent.

Mr. Wells's chief defect is his failure to discover that the best part of his religion is but a restatement of the Gospel of Jesus and in his failure to realize that we are not merely the "agents," but also the eternal sons of the everlasting, ultimately victorious and triumphant Eternal God, Who is achieving the infinitude which Wells seems to deny Him.

## V

The most serious problem is what to do with the existing cults. They are at present the most difficult obstacles in the way of the realization of the Kingdom of God. This in spite of the fact, perhaps because of it, that they hold themselves to be the true and final channels of the Kingdom. They

are competitors of the Kingdom because their adherents believe that the most important thing they can do is to build up the cult if need be at the expense of all other cults. They teach their adherents, and require their ministers to teach, that the traditional theology which their founders formulated is the highest expression of theological truth and when real Christianity arises to show the falsity and limitations of their interpretations they are ready to cast it out, together with its adherents, as heretical. The minister of a Church instead of being primarily a prophet of the Kingdom is a leader of a localized branch of his cult and his first task is to extend its membership, its influence, and its income. His own success is measured by the extent to which he can make his parish or congregation prosperous.

As the existing Churches are organized on the basis of an exploiting economic system and as he must win the allegiance of the successful men of the community, usually members of exploiting classes, in order to succeed, the minister must become the beneficiary of exploitation. Either he must break with the established order or renounce success, as usually understood. He must become a prophesier of smooth things, a false prophet, or else risk such dangers as have confronted the true prophets in all ages, and bear the odium of denominational disloyalty and heresy.

Yet the situation is not altogether hopeless. Each denomination is founded, in its own view, on the pure teaching of Christ and His Leadership. The

man who is loyal to these is loyal to the higher allegiance of the cult itself, even though he rejects the traditional interpretation of the cult's theology. It is the duty, therefore, of every Christian minister to teach the theology of Jesus as clearly as he may be able to comprehend it, no matter where it conflicts with the inherited opinion of his sect. He may do this with a better hope because of the large number within all the cults who have already swung away from and abandoned the inadequate theology of the cults' founders. The following practical suggestion of Royce is here very much in place:

What is practically necessary, therefore, is this: Let your Christology be the practical acknowledgment of the Spirit of the universal and beloved community. This is the sufficient and practical faith. Love this faith, teach this faith, preach this faith, in whatever words, through whatever symbol, by means of whatever forms of creeds, in accordance with whatever practices you find best to enable you with sincere intent and a whole heart to symbolize and to realize the Spirit in the community.<sup>1</sup>

Judge every social device, every proposed reform and every local enterprise by the one test: Does this help towards the coming of the universal community? If you have a church, judge your own church by this standard; and if your own church does not yet fully meet this standard, aid in reforming your church accordingly. If . . . you hold the true church to be invisible, require all whom you can influence to help render it visible.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The Problem of Christianity," vol. II, p. 428.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* vol. II, p. 431.

The principle of Jesus "Whoso seeketh to save his life shall lose it, and whoso loseth his life for My sake and the Gospel's, shall find it," should be taken by the cults as their immediate guide. The cult exists only for the Kingdom and it should seek to die, if necessary, in order that its sacrificial death may usher in the Kingdom and that it may live again as a part of the Universal Community.

The failure of "Historic Christianity" to realize this goal has been due to "the combined waywardness of the religious caprices of all Christian mankind" (Royce). One who has had experience in modern Church life must feel that whereas waywardness and caprice are still strong in the cults, in view of the seriousness of the eternal issues involved, it is high time for the cults to waive all petty questions and seek to lose their lives in the true Church of Christ.

For the true Church . . . is still a sort of ideal challenge to the faithful, rather than an already fulfilled institution—a call upon men for a heavenly quest, rather than a present possession of humanity. "Create me"—this is the word that the Church, viewed as an idea, addresses to mankind.<sup>1</sup>

## VI

Educational institutions should have a large share in contributing to the campaign of education for the spread of an understanding of what Christianity really is. The department of literature should teach the results of scientific literary criti-

<sup>1</sup> Royce, op. cit. vol. I, p. 54.

cism of Biblical literature. The department of philosophy should include courses on the appreciation of the intellectual value of a theology of the prophets and of Jesus. The course in ethics should lay chief stress upon the universal absolute ethics of Jesus. The department of economics has a wonderful opportunity to show how the law of service could be made the basis of economic life in production and distribution, and how the present system of exploitation could be made to give way to a social organization animated by the teachings of Jesus. The department of history should present a scientific impartial account of Church History and institutions, showing wherein they succeeded or failed in expressing the underlying thought and Mind of the Master. Every well-equipped University should have courses in Comparative Religion which should aim to discover and recognize the principles of the universal religion wherever found.

## VII

The greatest opportunities from the educational point of view remain with the institutions of the Christian family and of the converted Christian parish or congregation. At present parents with liberal views hesitate to teach their convictions about religion to their children out of a false reverence for the traditional orthodox views which they themselves have rejected. The opportunity of the father and mother is vast when we recall that they deal with those who are by nature members

of the Kingdom of Heaven. In teaching religion to their children parents should also remember the advice of Jesus to learn about the Kingdom from the children themselves. This will teach them the proper reverence for childhood which must lie at the basis of every happy family life.

The educational opportunities of the converted parish church or congregation are almost as great. We already have churches which gladly welcome the preaching of the "Social Gospel." At present this is generally rather tolerated than taken as a practical program of the parish life. The "Social Service" of the parish in the main is usually confined to the employment of a staff of paid social workers, "Parish Visitors," "Visiting Nurses," and the like. What is needed is an application of this principle to the total parish life. The social Gospel of the prophets and Jesus should be discriminatingly taught in the Sunday Schools, and the laity should recognize the demands which that Gospel makes upon them in the effort toward the purifying and reorganizing of the life of the community. The prophetic Gospel was a "lay Gospel." It consists not merely in words or ceremonial acts but in a life of service. It demands not merely "sayers" but "doers." The laity are those who must finally abolish the evils of exploitation and reorganize our economic system on the basis of service. The Churches can only continue to survive if they contribute to a new and final reformation not restricted to the idea of the Church itself as a sepa-

rate institution, not even restricted to the idea of organized Christianity saving itself by pooling its interests in one great unified religious cult, but a reformation contemplating the whole program of Jesus Christ for world redemption.

## VIII

One portion of the Church's opportunity for serving the interests of the community, it has appreciated perhaps better than the rest, namely, the moulding of the individual life through teaching men to pray—both privately and in common worship. Prayer concerns the very well-springs of life and character. It is the primary means of attaining the God-consciousness apart from which there would be no basis for the hope of the Kingdom of God, but even in this department the Church can render far greater service than ever in the past, by making its services conform to the larger vision of the real teaching of Christ and bringing it into conscious relationship with the coming of the Kingdom. To do this it requires nothing more than to interpret and extend its universal model the "Lord's Prayer." Men put the highest and best of themselves into prayer. They must extend this into the life of the community. The ideal is expressed as the movement to incarnate the Spirit of Jesus in humanity beginning with the smaller units of the community and extending that Spirit by the leavening process till the whole of mankind is transformed into the Body of Christ.



## IX

So far but little has been said on the question of individual immortality. This doctrine is found only by implication in the teachings of the prophets and is but little stressed in the teachings of Jesus. This contrasts with the attitude of the Mystery Cults whether Greek or Christian which make the achievement of a happy immortality the first object of their quest.

Jesus warned men against this quest as liable to defeat its own end. Yet His thought becomes utterly unintelligible unless the doctrine of individual immortality is recognized as everywhere underlying His teaching. It is inseparable from the doctrine of the infinite value of the individual man. Once this idea is acted upon, a belief in immortality becomes natural and inevitable instead of being an effort to trust "the larger hope." One reason why the quest for immortality is not stressed by Jesus is because He believed it the present possession of all men.

The doctrine of immortality is obscured and weakened by our common social practices in treating men as objects to be exploited. As it was a principle of the Kantian ethic always to treat humanity as a person and never as a thing, much more was it the underlying precept of the ethics of Jesus. Men who live up to this cannot doubt immortality. It will become a perfectly natural and spontaneous belief on the part of all men in a community which

treats individuals as immortal and not as mere wheels or parts in an economic machine.

One aspect of the aspiration after immortality is the ambition of men to achieve greatness.

The quest for greatness and the leaving behind of an immortal name has too commonly followed the line of ambitious exploitation. It has sought the greatness of the individual through the subordination of other individuals. The folly and emptiness of this kind of fame and greatness has been set forth by all great thinkers and by the poets of real insight into life who could not yet set aside their own desire for greatness. For after all, greatness is inherent in the idea of the full development of every man. Greatness truly conceived must be democratized and universalized. It must be possible for every man who strives for the mastery to win the prize.

Jesus points the way through which alone any may become great and at the same time the way in which the attainment of greatness is open to all men and may become their common possession. He points the goal of the highest ambition in the law of service. This ambition He proclaims as the chief end of His Own Mission. He Himself came not to exploit but to serve—"Not to be ministered unto but to minister." He defines true greatness and universalizes it in one sentence "He that would be greatest among you, let him be the servant of all." Thus ambition is not destroyed but directed to the only true goal.

In solving the problem of human existence Jesus also interprets the meaning of the physical universe. It is the Father's house of many mansions. The stars, the suns, and their encircling universes of planets are the eternal dwelling places of the Spirits and serve the ends of spiritual beings. By this thought the whole bulk of physical matter is sacramentalized—becomes sacred. The material universes already obey the rule of God in the only way which impersonal objects can, through obedience to the reign of law. Eternal spiritual beings like men cannot thus be ruled by external compulsion but through moral influence. When men have come voluntarily to find their places in the Home and Family of God and shall have established the universal Reign of God in their own lives and in the lives of the Universal Community they will then find themselves at home in the splendid material universe the only worthy House of God which even so cannot contain Him. But what material universes cannot do, any individual man may be able to do—contain the whole life of God within himself. This is the ultimate goal of human individuals and till it has been reached and the Kingdom established on earth, we may not cease to pray—

Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done On Earth As  
It Is In Heaven. Amen, So Be It, Lord.

## X

In the present crisis humanity again stands at the parting of the ways. Once again the Eternal Al-

ternative presents itself afresh, False Messiahs have come claiming to be the Lord's Chosen and Anointed Ones and have indeed deceived the very elect, who have fallen down and worshipped the Devil who promised them all the kingdoms of the earth as a reward for submission. The diabolical instruments of fomented hatreds, fair and lying words, broken faith, collective assassinations have been invoked in behalf of a world *Kultur* based upon force. The bribe which the true Messiah spurned on the Mount of Temptation has been eagerly embraced by those who claimed the Divine right through God's grace to shatter the nations and shepherd them with the iron flail of a tribal demi-god. The Judas bribe has increased from thirty silver pieces to no less than the world itself.

For centuries self-styled Christians have been carrying on a side enterprise in exploitation. Now the issue has been brought to its logical culmination and attained cosmic proportions. The world is reaping the fruits of the leadership of false Messiahs. Satan is paying back the harvest of tares. The hour of the Kingdom has again struck. Will mankind repudiate its false Messiahs, its demi-gods, its mammons? Will it heed the Message of the true Messiah, the Son of Man?

Jesus preached but one sermon—He had but one theme—the Kingdom of God,—the way and the means of its coming. His followers to-day should take up and echo that strain till it reverberate in the thundertones of a great multitude of prophetic

messengers—"Repent ye, for the reign of God is at hand." "Repent"—that is—"Get a new mind;" "Get a new insight into the real meaning of life and reorganize your own life in union with it"—"See world history in the light of the Will and Plan of God and set your own will in co-operation with His."

Let Omar and his cult turn from the mournful plaint—

Ah Love, could you and I with Him conspire,  
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire—  
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then  
Remould it nearer to the Heart's Desire?

and let the men of this generation arise—and now if the shattering process has gone far enough,—let collective humanity under God remould "the scheme of things entire" nearer to the desire of the battered, bleeding, broken hearts of the sons and daughters of men—nearer to the heart of the suffering Son of Man—nearer to the Heart and Mind of the Universal God and Father of all souls.

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